

## The importance of fellowship

C.H Spurgeon said:

Satan always hates Christian fellowship; it is his policy to keep Christians apart. Anything which can divide saints from one another he delights in. He attaches far more importance to godly intercourse than we do. Since union is strength, he does his best to promote separation.

Some Christians try to go to heaven alone, in solitude. But believers are not compared to bears or lions or other animals that wander alone. Those who belong to Christ are sheep in this respect, that they love to get together. Sheep go in flocks, and so do God's people.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2: 42 – 47

### 1) Fellowship is a place of belonging

- Human beings are social creatures and were always intended to mix with one another, albeit at different levels depending on their personality types.
- When we entered our new life in Christ we were baptised by the Spirit into the body of Christ. We make up the one body of Christ.
  - 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 13 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
  - Becoming a believer doesn't mean a life of isolation lived in relationship with the Lord and no one else. We have been immersed into the body of Christ, which is formed by the believers in Him who have drunk of one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.
  - Romans 12: 5 In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
  - We find our sense of belonging in the body of Christ. If anyone has no sense of belonging they either don't understand Christian fellowship, or the church isn't being the true church to those who have come into the church.
- Right from the beginning God intended that his people be a community that loved and served him.
  - The Israelite nation was to be a people gathered to worship and serve God as a community.
  - One of the judgements on certain sins in Israel was that they would be cut off their people. This doesn't seem to be a big thing for people who have grown up in individualistic cultures, but people from community-oriented cultures understand the harshness of such a judgment.
  - They would lose part of who they are, their identity, their corporate worship, their hope that's found in God.
- God always intended the body of Christ to be more than a series of meetings, but a community to belong to of which he's the head.
  - Our identity is in Christ and the body of Christ, as the two are inseparable.

## 2) It's a passion of the believer

- We see that the first church in Jerusalem devoted themselves to fellowship, besides the other aspects of the church.
  - The word devoted means a lot more than just attending a meeting. It means being earnest towards, persevering in, to be constantly diligent in something.
  - This is a far cry from doing something as a mere duty.
- Fellowship with the believers is like someone being with their family. They want to be there. It's their safe place. It's the place where they belong. It's a place of acceptance and encouragement.
  - Yes, as with families, it is also a place where there are issues and trauma. It's not a place of perfection because none of us is perfect and we're all on a journey. But we still know that this is where we belong.
- The basis of our passion for fellowship with the believers is our love for Christ and for one another.
  - 2 Corinthians 5: 14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.
  - 1 John 3: 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other.
  - We know that we're an integral part of the body of Christ is because we love each other.
  - We know that we love God because we love each other.
  - Others will know that we are Christ's disciples because we love each other.

## 3) It's a place of purpose

- The purpose of ministry
- Although God has a specific calling and ministry for each believer, it always comes out of the fellowship of believers.
  - Jesus called his disciples together and commanded them to go make disciples of all nations.
  - Paul and Silas were sent out from the fellowship of believers.
- The purpose of encouragement
  - Hebrews 10: 24 – 25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another —and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
  - We live in a very negative world and need constant encouragement.
  - Some of us go through difficulties constantly and need others just to be there to stand with us. This gives us strength to carry on.
  - We might feel despondent in our work or ministry and need to hear a word of encouragement to keep going.
  - Being a Christian alone is like being a coal that has been taken out of the fire and grows cold. The coal will soon heat up once it's put back into the fire. So is the importance of Christian fellowship.
- The purpose of meeting needs
  - A community always looks after their own and so there should never be anyone in the community of believers who hasn't had their basic needs met.
  - These needs could be material, emotional, or spiritual.

Let us then never downplay the importance of Christian fellowship with one another. It is Christ honouring.