

Fellowship with Christians

1 Corinthians 1:4-10

1 Corinthians 1:4-10 HCSB I always thank my God for you because of God's grace given to you in Christ Jesus, **5** that by Him you were made rich in everything--in all speaking and all knowledge-- **6** as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you, **7** so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. **8** He will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** God is faithful; by Him you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **10** Now I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all say the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.

According to verse 9 we are called to the fellowship of the Son. That calling comes with some benefits and some responsibilities.

The benefits of fellowship

Heart warmth. Fellowship that is based on Christ warms the heart.

- **Luke 24:32 HCSB** So they said to each other, "Weren't our hearts ablaze within us while He was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?"

Spiritual radiance. It is a delight to the soul, and promotes spiritual radiance.

- **Psalms 34:5,8 HCSB** Those who look to Him are radiant with joy; their faces will never be ashamed. **8** Taste and see that the LORD is good. How happy is the man who takes refuge in Him!

An indelible mark. It leaves a mark on our lives.

- **Acts 4:13 HCSB** When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and knew that they had been with Jesus.

The conditions for true fellowship

Christ-based. True fellowship must be based on Christ and thus can only be found in spiritual assemblies. **Matthew 18:20 HCSB** For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them."

Luke 24:15 HCSB And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus Himself came near and began to walk along with them.

Fellowship is a great privilege, possible whenever we truly come together "in Jesus' name"; celebrating His person and promoting His purposes in church, Bible studies, prayer meetings, home groups, with roommates or family. It is how God meets our needs--it is His "supply line". Are we taking advantage of this privilege?

Spiritual receptivity. Spiritual receptivity is a pre-condition for fellowship.

- **Revelation 3:20 HCSB** Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me.

Spiritual and practical unity. Unity and a common concern is another prerequisite.

- **Acts 4:32 HCSB** Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common.

The worst thing we could do is to try to imitate the external behavior of the first century church without going through the internal changes, led by the Spirit. True fellowship requires at least: repentance, submission to the light of God's Word, judgment (in the sense of discernment), protection, good stewardship, the grace gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, and real love. All this is possible, but only "in Christ" for without Him we can do nothing.

Judgment/Discernment.

- **1 Corinthians 5:3, 12 HCSB** For though absent in body but present in spirit, I have already decided about him who has done this thing as though I were present. **12** For what is it to me to judge outsiders? Do you not judge those who are inside?
- **2 John 1:10-11 HCSB** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your home, and don't say, "Welcome," to him; **11** for the one who says, "Welcome," to him shares in his evil works.
- **1 Corinthians 15:33 HCSB** Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

Tough love: protection of the fellowship

- **2 Corinthians 6:14, 17 HCSB** Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? **17** **Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you.**

Discipling new believers requires some "diaper changing" from time to time. Obviously we must be patient with those who are going through the process of spiritual growth. We need to not kick those who have fallen. Having said that, when a professing Christian willfully, deliberately and unrepentantly continues in sin, we are commanded to take some uncomfortable action.

- **1 Corinthians 5:9-11 HCSB** I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- **10** by no means referring to this world's immoral people, or to the greedy and swindlers, or to idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world. **11** But now I am writing you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother who is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a reviler, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person.
- **2 Timothy 3:1-2, 5 HCSB** But know this: difficult times will come in the last days. **2** For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **5** holding to the form of religion but denying its power. Avoid these people!

Repentance. Fellowship requires repentance of our sin and hard-heartedness.

- **John 6:40 HCSB** **For this is the will of My Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."**
- **Acts 17:30 HCSB** "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent,
- **Revelation 2:4-5 HCSB** **But I have this against you: you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place-- unless you repent.**

Sanctification or holy living.

- **1 John 1:5-7 HCSB** Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. **6** If we say, "We have fellowship with Him," and walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- **Ephesians 5:11 HCSB** Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead, expose them.

The pattern of fellowship

Our personal testimony helps others in joining in fellowship.

- **1 John 1:3-4 HCSB** what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may have fellowship along with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. **4** We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

We must have personally experienced the Lord and then must be willing to share that experience with others.

Our fellowship should then enable our testimony to others.

- **Colossians 3:12-15 HCSB** Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, **13** accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must *forgive*. **14** Above all, *put on love*--the perfect bond of unity. **15** And let the peace of the Messiah, to which you were also called in one body, control your hearts. Be thankful.
- **John 13:34-35 HCSB** "I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Fellowship can take place in our homes.

- **1 Corinthians 6:19 HCSB** Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,
- **Colossians 4:15 HCSB** Give my greetings to the brothers in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.
- **Romans 16:5 HCSB** Greet also the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epaphroditus, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.
- **Acts 20:20 HCSB** and that I did not shrink back from proclaiming to you anything that was profitable, or from teaching it to you in public and from house to house.

However, it should not preclude organized church.

- **Ephesians 4:11-12 HCSB** And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, **12** for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ,
- **Titus 1:5-9 HCSB** The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town: **6** someone who is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of wildness or rebellion. **7** For an overseer, as God's manager, must be blameless, not arrogant, not quick tempered, not addicted to wine, not a bully, not greedy for money, **8** but hospitable,

loving what is good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it.

- [Hebrews 13:17 HCSB](#) Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Conclusion

Fellowship should be a priority in our lives – even in times of persecution.

- [Hebrews 10:25 HCSB](#) not staying away from our meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.