

## **Get Growing - Session 4 - "Fellowship"**

- Good Evening, welcome to session 4 of our Get Growing Series
- We are learning how to grow as Christians in this series on Wednesday nights
- Let's pray
- Our famous wheel diagram
- The four spokes represent the 4 fundamental activities of Christian growth
- Two vertical - our interaction with God - prayer and the Word
- Two horizontal - our interaction with others
- Tonight we look at the very important spoke called fellowship

### I. Get Growing - Session 4 - Fellowship

#### A. Fellowship Basics

- Definition
  - ▶ Ok let's start with a clear definition of what fellowship is
  - ▶ The Greek word translated fellowship in our English Bibles is the word, Koinonia
  - ▶ This is a word that you will hear quite often in Christian circles, Koinonia, we are to have Koinonia as Christians, fellowship
  - ▶ It means to have in common, to share in what you have in common with others
  - ▶ A close association with others involving mutual interests, sharing and participation
  - ▶ It's a pretty simple concept to understand
  - ▶ Bike Club
  - ▶ Dallas Cowboys
  - ▶ Barn Raising
- Christian Fellowship
  - ▶ When you are born again as a Christian, you are born into the family of God
  - ▶ You become a son or daughter in the family of God

- ▶ You become a member of the church
- ▶ You have many fellow church members, you have many brothers and sisters in Christ
- ▶ You share everything about the Christian faith in common with your brothers and sisters in Christ
- ▶ The doctrine of the Christian faith, the Bible, the mission of the Christian faith, the morals of the Christian faith, the hope of the Christian faith, the ordinances of the Christian faith like Baptism or Communion
- ▶ So to fellowship is to gather together with your brothers and sisters in Christ regularly sharing in the Christian faith, participating in the Christian faith, involved with one another in the Christian faith
- ▶ Now the Church is a big family! It's comprised of every single born again Christian on planet earth!
- ▶ We have many brothers and sisters in Christ that we will never meet until we get to heaven
- ▶ So how do you fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ?
- ▶ You become intimately and actively involved with your brothers and sisters in Christ at a local church
- ▶ A local family of believers
- ▶ Your local church is to be your home family, your home base, that's where you fellowship
- ▶ No I am a strong believer in the local church as the base of operations
- ▶ Some Christians will get heavily involved in para church organizations
- ▶ College - Cru, Navigators, Baptist Student Union, cool places, excellent place
- ▶ Some Christians get super involved in a home Bible Study group made up of Christians who attend different churches, that's cool
- ▶ But local church involvement is the emphasis in my opinion

- ▶ So if the Lord has lead you to this local church, Calvary Chapel Sun City, than you are to be actively and intimately involved with your brothers and sisters in Christ here
  - ▶ This is home base, this is your family
  - ▶ Consistently attending worship services here
  - ▶ Involved in a small group ministry like the men's ministry, the women's ministry
  - ▶ Serving in the Body of Christ - so many ministries to be involved in
  - ▶ Participating in community outreaches
  - ▶ Generously supporting the ministry financially, sharing in the work of the ministry
  - ▶ Worshipping the Lord with your brothers and sisters in Christ
  - ▶ Growing spiritually together with your brothers and sisters in Christ
  - ▶ Learning the Bible together with your brothers and sisters in Christ
  - ▶ Praying together with your brothers and sisters in Christ
  - ▶ Working and serving together with your brothers and sisters in Christ
- Priority of Christian Fellowship
    - ▶ Christian fellowship is to be a priority in your life
    - ▶ Christian you are commanded to fellowship, if you want to grow than you must fellowship with other Christians
    - ▶ Listen to the classic passage on Christian fellowship

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NKJV)

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

- ▶ You are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together
- ▶ You are to assemble, interesting word assemble

- ▶ The English word means to gather together, it also means to fit together separate components of an object
- ▶ Bikes on Christmas morning come assembled illustration
- ▶ You are to become not just a gatherer but a part of the church in all it's activities and functions and responsibilities
- ▶ You must make an effort in this
- ▶ Some folks are very social, they are very outgoing, they are extroverts, social butterflies, and it's really easy to just jump in, introduce themselves, get involved
- ▶ For others that's not so easy, and maybe that's the case for you
- ▶ Ask the Lord to give you the courage to try
- ▶ Join a small group, you don't have to talk, you don't have to pray out loud, make the effort
- ▶ Step out in faith and get involved in some aspect of the church
- ▶ There are tons of behind the scene things
- ▶ It must be something that you stay involved in
- ▶ It's so important!
- ▶ I believe that as a Christian your most important relationships and friendships in life should be reserved for brothers and sisters in Christ
- ▶ Your best friends should be Christians
- ▶ If you are single, then you should only be willing to date Christians, You are commanded to marry Christians

2 Corinthians 6:14 (NKJV)

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NKJV)

33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

- ▶ That is a really intense verse, please notice that

- ▶ So that means that you might need to make some tough decisions when you become a Christian
- ▶ There may be some friendships, there may be a group that you might need to remove yourself from
- ▶ They lead you to bad stuff, they keep you from growing, they lead back into worldly ways
- ▶ You have to leave that and make new friends
- ▶ You may be in a dating relationship that is not right, it's leading you down the wrong path
- ▶ Marriage is binding, pray for a true conversion in your spouse
- ▶ My situation at NMSU so long ago
- ▶ Save your closest friendships and relationships to those with other Christians

## B. Benefits of Fellowship

- Encouragement
  - ▶ Now there are so many benefits to Christian fellowship
  - ▶ Benefit number one: encouragement
  - ▶ It is so important to be actively involved in the lives of your brothers and sisters in Christ because you give and receive encouragement
  - ▶ You get encouraged as a Christian to be all that you can be in Christ Jesus, you give encouragement to other Christians so that they can be all that they can be in Christ Jesus
  - ▶ Just the presence of the saints together in a worship service is so encouraging
  - ▶ We are here worshipping together, studying the Bible together, greeting one another - so encouraging!
  - ▶ I'm not alone! There are others
  - ▶ Meeting together for prayer and Bible study encourages you to grow, to learn
  - ▶ Mentoring and being mentored - discipling
  - ▶ Sharpening one another

Proverbs 27:17 (NKJV)

17 As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- ▶ Notice again the classic verse on Christian Fellowship

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- ▶ Exhorting one another
  - ▶ Stirring up love and good works in one another
  - ▶ Stir up - paroxuno - to provoke, provoking one another to love and good works
  - ▶ Brothers and sisters in Christ dreaming together about what they can do for Christ
  - ▶ Dreaming to be a pastor, dreaming about starting a new kind of outreach or minister
  - ▶ Encouraging one another to exercise love
  - ▶ You are motivated and challenged by other Christians to grow, and you do the same with others
  - ▶ Encouragement
- Support
    - ▶ Another benefit - support
    - ▶ As Christians we all go through difficult times in life - a disappointment, a lost job, an accident, sickness, some kind of tragedy, losing a loved one, a failed relationship, or maybe just being hassled by the world or the enemy
    - ▶ You enjoy support from your brothers and sisters in Christ in those difficult times
    - ▶ You get prayer, you get a shoulder to cry on
    - ▶ Practical help - groceries, help with money, meals, visitation

- ▶ If you are involved in the family of God you receive comfort and support from the family of God
  - ▶ And when others are going through difficult times you can give them support, in practical ways
  - ▶ So beautiful to watch people at this church care for others who are going through COVID, or some kind of sickness
  - ▶ Money gifts given to those who are struggling financially
  - ▶ You get to experience the comfort of God through the people of God, and you can give others that same experience
  - ▶ Beautiful ways: college - meals for the students
  - ▶ We often get calls from total strangers asking us to help them with their bills - first question - what church do you attend?
  - ▶ I don't know how people get through the difficulties in life without the help of the Lord and the church
  - ▶ You grow in your appreciation of God's grace and care for you through His people
  - ▶ You grow in the participation of God's grace and care for others
- Discover calling
    - ▶ Another benefit - you will discover your calling in the church, your place in the church
    - ▶ You get involved with other Christians, you get involved in ministries, you find out what you are good at, what you are passionate about
    - ▶ Every Christian has a spiritual gift
    - ▶ The church offers you a laboratory so to speak to try things out, test things out
    - ▶ Do you like to teach? Do you like working with children, youth, adults?
    - ▶ You try some mission trips, called to missions?
    - ▶ Do you like sharing the gospel through technology
    - ▶ Do you like sharing the gospel through acts of compassion and mercy, soup kitchens, rescue house, etc....

- ▶ Remember the great commission

Matthew 28:18–20 (NKJV)

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

- ▶ So many wonderful benefits, you will grow like crazy as a Christian, you will help others to grow like crazy as Christians
- ▶ So be a part of it, be committed to it
- Warning
  - ▶ Now I need to give you a warning
  - ▶ The church this side of heaven is not perfect
  - ▶ The family of God this side of heaven is not perfect
  - ▶ You are going to experience hurt in your attempts at fellowship and you need to know that going in
  - ▶ There are going to be other Christians that rub you the wrong way
  - ▶ You are going to experience personality conflict
  - ▶ You are going to experience betrayal
  - ▶ Other Christians are going to hurt you, fail you, disappoint you
  - ▶ Gathering of porcupines: we need each other but we also “needle” each other
  - ▶ Christians get hurt in churches, I wish that wasn’t the case, but it is
  - ▶ I’ve been hurt badly in church, I no doubt have hurt folks in church
  - ▶ Please understand that the church is not perfect
  - ▶ We are all sinners saved by grace, we have different levels of maturity



- ▶ We become zealous and in our zeal judge others, hurt others
- ▶ Think of your own family - there are issues, even in a wonderful Christian family, there are still issues, arguments
- ▶ But these are also great opportunities for growth: growing in forgiveness, in grace, in mercy, in learning how to deal with different personalities
- ▶ I know Christians who have completely left the church because of these things, don't, stick with it
- ▶ You will develop the best friendships and relationships in your life
- ▶ Learning to love when even when it's hard

John 13:34–35 (NKJV)

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

### Conclusion

- Communion is a great example of the fellowship
- We share in common the gospel, the sacrifice of Christ
- Jesus commanded us to keep this communion ordinance office
- Something to do corporately together
- So close this evening by partaking of communion together