

Christian Fellowship

1 John 1:3

Introduction

1. In John's first epistle he says that the reason that he declares the gospel to us is so that we who read the letter may have fellowship with him and the other apostles.
2. From the beginning to the end of the New Testament end we see the idea of fellowship woven within the doctrine of Christ as an essential element in His church.
3. Though the principal of fellowship is such an important part of the church, men with corrupt minds have twisted its meaning and its application so that their idea of fellowship has become foreign to what we see in the scriptures.
4. Because of this we must make sure that we are grounded in our understanding of the gospel of Christ and the relationship that His servants are to have with one another.

Discussion

I. What Is "Fellowship?"

- A. "Fellowship" as it is used in the New Testament has two contexts in which it is used.
 1. It is the relationship between two or more people who share something in common. Sharing a home or property for example – Acts 4:34.
 2. It also implies common interests and describes mutual agreement. To participate together toward common interests or goals. Husbands and wives, for example, are two people acting as one working together for a common goal.
- B. Paul describes the church in this way in 1 Cor. 12:12; many individuals acting as one body working for the same goal.
- C. We need to make the distinction between spiritual (godly) fellowship and worldly.
 1. It is true that fellowship can be applied to all these things. But as men of God it is our duty to distinguish between the spiritual nature of fellowship and the fleshly nature.
 2. **2 John 9-11**: We need to make sure that our understanding and practice of fellowship is limited to what God has specified.

II. The Nature of Our Fellowship

- A. It is with God first.
 1. Christ is our foundation, He is the standard, the immovable rock upon which we base all that we do (1 Cor. 3:11).
 2. Our fellowship as Christians must therefore be with Him first.
 3. When we are baptized we are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27) and are therefore joined to Christ in covenant relationship. We then remain in that relationship by fulfilling the condition of keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3-6).
- B. It is with our brethren second.
 1. When other men submit themselves to the will of God and are joined to Christ we also have fellowship with them because we now have the same faith.
 - a. 1 John 1:3 – Thus, John proclaimed the gospel so that we could have fellowship with him, who also has fellowship with God by the same gospel.
 - b. Acts 2:42: When the first Jews were baptized into the church they had fellowship with the apostles AFTER their obedience.
 - c.

2. According to the spiritual principals of this relationship the Christians who are gathered here today are in fellowship because we are all partakers of the Grace of Christ and all share the same common faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).
3. In a like manner we also have fellowship with faithful men all over the world who share in that same faith.

C. Because of spiritual fellowship, physical fellowship must follow.

III. The Christian Fellowship

- A. Spiritual participation or association: Acts 2:42; Phil. 1:5; 1 John 1:6, 7
- B. Fellowship is joint (mutual) in nature: 1 John 1:7; Gal. 2:9, 10; Phil. 4:15; 2 Cor. 6:14-18
- C. Fellowship with other Christians results from being in fellowship with God.
 1. 1 John 1:1-3; John 17:20-21; Acts 9:26-28; 1 Pet. 2:17; 2 John 9-11
 2. The reverse is true as well! cf. 3 John 5-8
- D. When we walk in darkness (sin) we no longer have fellowship with God: 1 John 1:6; 3:4-9; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- E. When we no longer have fellowship with God then our fellowship with our brethren must automatically be severed (for God is our link): 2 Thess. 3:6, 13; 1 Cor. 5:1-11
- F. If we try to have fellowship with a brother in sin out side of Christ then we jeopardize our own fellowship because of our disobedience to the will of God.

Conclusion

1. Remember, our fellowship must be with God and Him first (Matt. 10:37).
2. If we desire to have fellowship with Him we must cast off all other cares and worries and submit completely to Him (Isa. 64:8). If we do not then we remain bound to Satan by our sins.
3. Will you come out of your sins today and be joined to God? Do not linger, the time is now (1 Cor. 6:2).

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Avondale church of Christ
1606 Glen Willow Rd., P.O. Box 421, Avondale, PA 19311
Phone: (610) 268-2088
Email: info@avondalechristians.com
Website: www.avondalechristians.com

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