

Topic: Fellowship

Scriptural References

1 John 1:5-7, 2 Corinthians 4:6-7, James 4:7-8

Biblical Explanation

You were created for connection with God and with other believers. If you are living out your Christian faith in isolation, separate from other believers, you are doing so in opposition to God's design. 1 John 1:5-7 says, "this is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." John uses a term that we don't often use today. Fellowship. These verses communicate that fellowship happens with you as a believer and God, as well as the believers with one another. Fellowship is defined as shared participation, mutual association, a willingness on behalf of both parties to contribute. It's a common experience based on people participating as givers and receivers. And God says that you get to have fellowship with Him—you get to share or participate with God. What does that look like?

Fellowship happens when you give of yourself as God gave Himself to us. In 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 Paul reveals that God places in our hearts the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The knowledge, the awareness, the reality that God exists is clear to you and it is not just information, it is a heart conviction. God gives us Jesus Christ to delight in His love, kindness, and compassion. God gives Himself in giving us Jesus. But He asks the same of you. James 4:7-8 say to submit to God (ESV) or draw near to God (NCV) and that God will draw near to you. God desires intimate relationship with you, He wants an experience where giving and receiving happen between you and Him. But fellowship does not end with you and God.

Fellowship with one another spurs one to pursue our fullest potential in Christ. In fellowship with believers our relationships are not based on hobbies or our careers but are rooted in our focus on Christ. We may have many passions and interests but the foundation for fellowship is glorifying God. In community with other believers, fellowship is the environment where our sin is exposed and brought to light. It is the

where people who love and know you share with you aspects of your character that don't shine as bright because of the film of sin. Lastly, being in Christ-centered relationships of give and take pushes and stretches us to faithfully do what God expects of us. Whether God is stretching us to do beyond what we think we can manage or if God is exposing our fears being greater than our trust in Him, as we live for Jesus and have fellowship with one another, Jesus cleanses our minds of unrighteousness (1 John 1:6-7). When you are in fellowship with God and people, God is working on you and through you to bring Him glory which surpasses what we can imagine on our own.

Main Points

- You were created to fellowship with God and other believers
- Fellowship is sharing in a relationship with Jesus Christ where you receive Him as your Lord and you respond by giving Him your submission and allegiance.
- Fellowship is the basis for Christian relationships
- Fellowship with one another puts our focus on God
- Fellowship with one another empowers us to be a force used for God's glory
- Fellowship with one another spurs us on to be faithful to walking in God's plan for our lives.

Questions

1. Have you ever heard someone say they are good with God but don't need people? What does this statement mean and why would someone live this way?
2. What is fellowship?
3. Do you think of yourself as having fellowship with God? Why or why not? What would it look like?
4. How does the faith of other people bless or encourage you?
5. How could godly relationships/fellowship differ from relationships with people who are not Christians?
6. How could God use you to spur someone on to be who God wants them to be?
7. How have others empowered you in ways that you could not empower yourself?

Additional Resources

- "God's Life in Your Church's Soul: Thabiti Anyabwile on Fellowship". October 30, 2012. Matt Smethurst. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/gods-life-in-your-churchs-soul-thabiti-anyabwile-on-fellowship/>