

Devoted to Fellowship

Acts 2:42-47

Fellowship is a very “Baptistic” word. The only problem is that we have reduced the biblical meaning of *fellowship* to a slogan: “Feed them and they will come.”

Biblical *fellowship* includes “the breaking of bread” together, but it is much greater than that.

For several Sundays we have been looking at “the revived church.” We have based on series on Acts 2:42-47. These verses describe the early church in terms of what they devoted themselves to. I see 5 things that the early church devoted itself to: The Bible, Prayer, Worship, Fellowship and Witness.

Today we look at *fellowship*.

I. The Meaning of Fellowship

1. The word for *fellowship* in the NT is the Greek word *koinonia*
2. We use this word today – but we have drained it of real meaning
3. Means – participation – communion – relationship – partnership
4. The early church was devoted to true fellowship
5. They were devoted to one another - they cared, they shared, they gave
6. That’s the description of Acts 2:42-47
7. That’s the NT portrait of the church – not a portrait of the ideal – a description of the real

II. This Level of Fellowship Comes Only Through Common Relationships

1. Read 1 John 1:1-7
2. In this passage, John speaks of his understanding of fellowship and offers an invitation for others to join him in this fellowship
3. 1 Jn 1:3 –
That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
4. The word that John uses here to speak of fellowship is this same word - “koinonia”
5. John speaking of himself and other believers – a community of faith – says, “*Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ*”

6. Fellowship is relational
7. The basic, foundational relationship that every human being has is with God
8. Koinonia in the church – fellowship in the body of Christ – begins with personal relationship with God
9. John says in order to have fellowship with us, you must have fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ
10. The early church experienced a deep level of interpersonal relationship based upon the foundational relationship with God
11. The world does not know, nor can it know, the level of relationship expressed in Acts and 1 John
12. Only those in relationship with God can experience this type of fellowship

III. Real Fellowship Becomes a Real Witness in the Community

1. Chuck Swindol tells a story of how the Roman Emperor Hadrian sent a man named Aristides to spy out a strange group of people known as Christians. Having seen them in action, Aristides returned with a mixed report that contained these words, which are often mistaken to be words from the Bible – “Behold, how they love one another”
2. Jesus said, “*By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, that you have love one for another*”
3. Real koinonia is reflective of unity and oneness
4. Jesus prayed in John 17 for the oneness of the body so that the world might know God
5. The world notices the church – often looking for the bad, failure, mess ups
6. There is much that is bad – but much that is good
7. Good makes an impact – Antioch, Thessalonica, Ephesus
8. The church that practices koinonia can make a difference

IV. The Greatest Danger to Koinonia is . . .

1. The greatest threat to real fellowship and oneness in the church is individualism
2. The church is a community of believers bound together by their union with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ
3. We become members of the body as we die to self and commit ourselves to participate or partner with God in His kingdom purpose

4. When we take our eyes off of God's purpose and make our own desires more important than the kingdom, we become a threat to the unity of the body
5. This is what happened in the early church in Acts 5 with Annanias and Sapphira
6. They attempted to get glory rather than give glory to God - self became the focus
7. The body was threatened with disunity again in ch 6
8. Maintaining unity in the body is a must for the witness of the church
9. Biblical fellowship is the answer to disunity
10. Getting self out of the way - loving others – sharing with others – caring for others – that is how the body maintains unity and witnesses to the world
11. This oneness – this is unity – this is what it means to be devoted to one another

CONCLUSION

- The stronger our fellowship with God, the stronger our fellowship with one another
- The deeper our fellowship, the more we will find encouragement from one another when we are gathered together
- The deeper our fellowship here, the more we will desire to be with one another even when we are not here
- The first step to having fellowship with one another is having fellowship with God
- Some of you need to restore fellowship with the Father this morning by seeking His forgiveness
- Some of you need to restore fellowship with another by seeking their forgiveness
- We all need to commit ourselves to maintain the unity of the body of Christ so that together we can impact our community for Christ