

14. Learning to Fellowship with One Another

In our last topic, we saw that one of the ways that we show the love of Christ is by being devoted to one another. We saw that to be devoted to one another means to love one another with a godly family love. We also saw that it means that we will walk alongside new Christians so that they know they are loved and so that they are given an example to follow. Then, we saw that we will help them become “adult sons and daughters” and full partners in ministry. We saw that this is actually Paul’s definition of what it means to “Make Disciples”. Today, we are going to see that happens as we share our lives with one another.

In 1 John 1:7, we read, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” The word that is translated “fellowship” is used twenty times in the New Testament and is translated by the words “fellowship”, “communion” or “sharing”. When it is translated “share” or “sharing” it talks about *Christians sharing together through financial gifts to help other Christians in need*. It is translated by the word “communion” twice in 1 Corinthians 10:16 where we read, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” In this context, it talks about the communion service where we are sharing together the bread and the cup that symbolize the body and blood of Christ.

In 1 John chapter 1, the word is used six times to speak either of our fellowship with Christ or our fellowship with one another. “Fellowship” speaks of the shared life that we have with Christ and the shared life that we have with one another as Christians as we walk in the light. Here, we see that it is the plan of Christ for Christians to learn to share our lives with Him and to learn to walk in the light so that we can truly share our lives with one another. When God created the heavens and the earth, He saw everything that He had created and it was very good. However, there was one thing that God saw that was not good. Genesis 2:18 says, “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” God said that it is not good that we should be alone (without fellowship).

God made a helper comparable to Adam but sin brought separation between Adam and both God and the helper that God had made comparable to him. Fellowship with God and others was replaced by separation between man and God; fear, guilt and shame within; and blame of others. In Acts 2:38, we see that God shows us that those that repented of their sin reversed the effects of sin and separation. That verse says, “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to enjoy their new relationship with the Father and the Son by learning to have fellowship with them.

We see that God promised two things to make fellowship possible with the Father and with Christ. Those who repented of their sin were promised that their sins would be forgiven. That changed the relationship from separation to relationship. Second, those who repented of their sin received the gift of the Holy Spirit. That made true fellowship with God possible. In 1 John 1:7, we saw that this fellowship is with the Father and with His Son. This relationship can never be destroyed

and we will enjoy this fellowship with the Father and the Son as we learn to walk in the light. However, learning to walk in the light will also make it possible to enjoy each of the nine ways mentioned in Acts 2:42-47 that the early church learned to enjoy fellowship with one another.

First, we see that the early Christians learned to enjoy fellowship with one another by having Bible study together. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The first thing that the early church did to begin enjoying fellowship together was to share the teachings of Christ together. Today, we would call that having Bible study together. Verse 46 tells us that these Bible studies were occurring daily both in the temple and in the homes of the new believers.

Second, we see that early Christians learned to enjoy fellowship by just being together as new believers that were walking in the light. It is interesting that this verse joins Bible study and fellowship together. When Christians are walking in obedience to what they are learning from the Word of God, that obedience causes them to be walking in the light and that automatically produces true fellowship. Christians shared their lives together as they were obedient to the Word of God.

Third, we see that the early Christians learned to enjoy fellowship together by breaking bread together. Acts 2:46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” The early Christians could share the Word with one another in the temple. However, due to the fact that there were many others there who were not believers, we see that they were breaking bread from house to house. They were eating their meals together with gladness and singleness of heart. These meals eaten together also gave them the opportunity to share communion together as they remembered what Christ had done through His death and resurrection.

Fourth, we see that the early Christians learned to enjoy fellowship together by praying with one another and for one another. Verse 42 points out the fact that as they got together for Bible study, fellowship and the breaking of bread, they also prayed together. Prayer for one another can include many things. In Acts 4:29-31, we see that they prayed together for boldness to speak the Word of God and Christ answered their prayer by giving them boldness to speak the Word of God. In Galatians 6:2, early Christians chose to show love to one another by bearing the burdens of one another through prayer.

Fifth, Acts 2:46 points out another way that the early Christians were enjoying fellowship with one another. We see that they were of one accord and in unity with one another. This oneness and unity caused the early believers to forget about their own needs and desires and become concerned about one another. Acts 2:44 says, “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common.” They shared what they had with one another and had already learned to think “we” instead of “my”. Instead of being self-centered and selfish, they were Christ-centered and concerned about one another.

Sixth, this concern for one another caused them to share what they had to meet the needs of other

Christians. Acts 2:45 says, “And sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” Here, we see that the new believers immediately realized that they were stewards of what God had given them and they looked for opportunities to share what they had with other believers. They even chose to sell their own possessions and goods to meet the needs of others. Here, we see that sharing their lives led them to also share their possessions with those in need.

Seventh, we already mentioned in the third point that they shared their meals with one another. However, they shared more than just their meals. They also shared other activities and did things with one another. In Acts 3:1, we see that Peter and John went together to the temple at the hour of prayer. The word that is translated “gladness” in verse 46 means *extreme joy*. Here, we see that the early believers were experiencing extreme joy as they shared activities together. This sharing together also caused them to develop a singleness of heart or purpose. They were no longer living to satisfy themselves. Instead, their purpose was to please the Lord and it produced extreme joy.

Eighth, in Acts 2:47 we see that they were praising God together. That verse says, “Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Among those who are not Christians, most people focus on their problems in life. The early believers learned as they walked in the light to give praise to God for what the Lord was doing in their lives. Here, we see that true fellowship will lead Christians to praise the Lord together for what the Lord is doing in their lives.

Ninth, Acts 2:47 also points out that another way the early believers shared their lives together was by sharing the Gospel together as they visited one another in their homes. This had a powerful impact in the lives of other family members. As other family members heard the Christians talk about Christ and His death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit was also working in the lives of those family members that were hearing the believers talk about Christ. Verse 47 tells us that the result of the believers talking about Christ together was the fact that others were repenting and turning to Christ so that the Lord was adding to the church daily those who were being saved.

One of the things we see is that the early believers were in daily contact with each other. They were experiencing fellowship with the Lord as they encouraged one another daily to walk in the light. They were experiencing fellowship with each other as they shared their lives together. God said in Genesis 2 that it is not good for people to be alone. Genesis 3 shows that Adam and Eve again felt alone when they sinned and tried to hide themselves from God and each other. We help our children learn to reverse the effects of original sin and experience great joy as we help them learn to share their lives with other Christians that are walking in the light. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to enjoy fellowship with Christ and with one another.