

Meanings of Fellowship, Pt. 2
Selected Scriptures, 2017-01-08A, #48

Introduction: One of the goals for this year is to consciously and consistently feed our faith and the faith of others.

Assignments: (1) Spend a few moments each day making a conscious effort to feed your faith. (2) Ask others especially your children and grandchildren: What are you doing to feed your faith? (3) Teach your children and grandchildren how to feed their faith.

One of the methods of feeding our faith is to practice the four continuing activities of the early church recorded in Acts 2:42. The four continuing activities are (1) Bible study – meditation, memorization, and application (Matthew 4:4; Romans 10:17; Job 23:12; cf. Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; James 1:22; Matthew 7:24-27). (2) Fellowship; (3) the Lord’s Supper; and (4) Prayers. Observed that the first two on the list of four are Bible study and fellowship...

Observed that in the book of Acts the celebration of the Lord’s Supper was corporate, and many of the prayers were corporate prayers (Acts 1:14, 24; 2:42; 3:1; 4:23-31; 6:4; 8:15; 12:5, 12; 14:23).

In a previous study, we begin to examine the means of “fellowship.” Two of the ways of determining the biblical definition of a word are to examine the different words used to translate a word and to examine the context in which a word is used. The Greek noun that is translated “fellowship” is *koinōnia* (κοινωνία), which occurs 20 times in the Greek New Testament and is translated by the AV “fellowship” 12 times.

Today we will continue to examine meanings of fellowship based on context and different translations of *koinōnia*.

I. Fellowship Means the Sharing of Resources to Meet Human Needs.

A. Some of the resources the believers in the early church shared with one another to meet human needs:

1. Bread (Acts 2:46)...
2. Blessings (Acts 2:45-46; 4:34-37).
3. Burdens (Acts 4:23; cf. Galatians 6:2)...
4. Beliefs (Acts 4:33; cf. Philemon 1:6).
5. Battles (Acts 4:23-31; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

B. They shared because they cared (Acts 2:44-47).

C. The Word to remember here is “sharing.”

II. Fellowship Means Partnership.

A. In Philippians 1:5, Paul gave thanks to God for the “partnership” or “fellowship” of the Philippian Christians in the spread of the gospel...

B. The adjective form of the Greek noun *koinōnia* is *koinōnos* (κοινωνός).

1. The adjective *koinōnos* is also used as a noun.
2. The AV translates *koinōnos*:
 - a. “Partners” (Luke 5:10),
 - b. “Partner” (2 Corinthians 8:23; Philemon 1:17),
 - c. “Companions” (Hebrews 10:33),
 - d. “Fellowship” (1 Corinthians 10:20).

- C. Working together for the glory of God and the good of others is one of the manifestation of fellowship...
- D. Paul mentions at least one partner or coworker in all of his letters (Romans 16:1-27; 1 Corinthians 16:10-24; 2 Corinthians 1:1, 19; 7:13; Galatians 2:1, 9; Ephesians 6:21; Philippians 1:1; 2:19, 25; 4:18; Colossians 4:7-18; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 1:16; 4:11-13, 19-21; Titus 3:12-15; Philemon 1:22-25).
- E. Many are lonely today in their old age because they did not take time to develop relationships...
- F. The right hand of fellowship is an act of acceptance of partners into the fellowship and also a welcoming of new members into the local body of believers in Christ (Galatians 2:9).

III. Fellowship Means Participation.

- A. “Partakers” in 1 Corinthians 10:18 and “fellowship” in 1 Corinthians 10:20 are both translations of the Greek adjective *koinōnos* (κοινωνός), which is also used as a noun.
- B. The Holman Christian Standard Bible translates *koinōnos* “participation.”
 - 1. Fellowship means participation in something with someone.
 - 2. “Participation” can be both negative and positive.
 - 3. We are commanded not to participate in evil (1 Corinthians 10:20-21):
 - a. “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent without not” (Proverbs 1:10).
 - b. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).
 - c. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).
 - d. We tend to become like those with whom we spend time:
 - 1) “The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm” (Proverbs 13:20, Holman Christian Standard Bible).
 - 2) “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals” (1 Corinthians 15:33, New American Standard Bible).
- C. Paul mentions participation in the sufferings of Christ in Philippians 3:10; cf. 1:29; Matthew 5: 11-12; Romans 8:18).

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