

Peer Fellowship

Jerry Bridges

I. Introduction: Fellowship 101.

A. Fellowship is not a luxury but a necessity. (Acts 2:42)

B. Fellowship is sharing the common life that we have in Jesus. (Luke 2:42; 1 John 1:3ff)

1. Fellowship is somewhat objective due to our membership in God's family.

2. Meanings of "koinania" in the New Testament:

a) To share or participate together.

1) Fellowship as members of the body of Christ.

2) Partnership in the work. (Philippians 1:5; 2 Corinthians 8:23)

b) To share with others what we have.

1) Share with each other spiritually. (Romans 1:11-12)

2) Share with each other materially. This is the most common use of "koinania." (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:16)

3. Essentially, we could summarize the uses and meanings of "koinania" in this: we belong to each other. (Romans 12:5)

II. We will be focusing on spiritually sharing with each other.

A. Fellowship is a necessity. God has made us so that our fellowship with Him would be fed by fellowship with others. –J.I. Packer

B. This idea of fellowship can be found throughout the Bible in the "one another" passages.

C. The common life of Christ is what fellowship meant for. The goal is of the common life and fellowship is the building up of the body of Christ as each part grows and is encouraged to grow by others. (Ephesians 4:14-16)

1. There is a balance of personal responsibility to grow and sharing and being challenged by others.

D. Spiritual fellowship is important because "two are better than one." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

1. Two have a better return for their work. Applying this principal to Bible study can challenge our preconceptions and help us learn better. (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:21; Acts 18:24-28; Proverbs 27:17)

2. Two people can encourage one another to persevere. We must hold each other up, infusing each other with courage, with scripture when we are tempted to get discouraged in the faith. (2 Corinthians 1; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:25, 35-36; Hebrews 12:1-13; Psalm 142:4; Galatians 6:2)

3. Two will keep each other warm. We must take initiative in challenging each other to persevere in the Christian life and reaching out to others. (Hebrews 10:24; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 4)

4. Two can defend themselves. Our fellowship should include defense against Satan by being accountable and open to each other and praying for each other. (James 5:16)

E. Our spiritual radar should be on all the time so we know who is struggling and can take initiative in providing fellowship to them.

D. None of these situations involve crisis. We should not wait until the people around us are in crisis before we help them.

F. God delights in true fellowship. (Malachi 3:7-8, 13-14, 16)

Application questions:

1. When you are trying to encourage another believer, do you find yourself more likely to simply “commiserate” with them or to give them courage to continue on? How can you use the Bible to give another Christian courage?

2. How can we defend other Christians from Satan?

3. Jerry talks about being sensitive to when other Christians need fellowship. What are some clues that can indicate that someone is in need of fellowship?
