

Fellowship

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

B. Fellowship is not just cookies and coffee in between Sunday services.

II. There are several principles of true fellowship outlined in this passage.

A. Two working together can produce more than each person working individually. (Ecclesiastes 4:9; Proverbs 27:17)

1. Teaching is a mutual relationship- that is, horizontal teaching of the Word. (Colossians 3:16)

2. Mutual teaching should take place in love, not in “spiritual one-upmanship.”
(Ephesians 4:14-15)

B. We need to encourage one another. This means that we need to inspire others to persevere in the face of hardship and show that we care for each other. (Ecclesiastes 4:10; Psalm 142:4; Hebrews 10:25, 32-36)

C. We need to spur one another on and stimulate each other spiritually. (Ecclesiastes 4:11; Hebrews 10:24; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

1. This should be a well thought through habit.

D. We need to defend each other against the world, the flesh and the devil. (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

1. We need to be in a “mutual defense pact” with other Christians.

2. This requires that we be open and vulnerable with one another about our weaknesses.

E. Many of the “one another” passages of the Bible put taking the initiative on the encourager- the one who gives help instead of gets help.

1. We need to develop a “radar system” that allows us to pick up on when someone needs help.

2. We need to both take help and give help- this is a mutual relationship.

3. We need to take a genuine interest in others.

Application questions:

1. When you find that someone is down, does your encouragement look like commiseration or like inspiration to persevere? Why is it easier to mutually complain than to mutually encourage?

2. What can you do create an environment that other Christians feel safe being vulnerable in?

3. What does it mean to mutually teach each other the scriptures and learn from other Christians?
