

Fellowship is Our Middle Name

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'" Psalm 122:1 (NLT)

I. Our church is a fellowship.

"Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved." Acts 2:41-47 (NLT)

"fellowship" = "koinonia" (ancient Greek) = "community, sharing, contributing partnership, joint participation"

Note: Paul said we should view ourselves as parts of the body of Christ.

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, 'I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,' that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,' would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' The head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you.' ...All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:12-21,27 (NLT)

A. We are a fellowship of faith.

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete."

1 John 1:3-4 (NLT)

B. We are a fellowship of transformation.

"Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

"I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 1:19-20 (NLT)

C. We are a fellowship on mission.

"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NLT)

D. We are a fellowship with a common enemy.

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

"A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT)

E. We are a fellowship of restoration.

"Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important."

Galatians 6:1-3 (NLT)

F. We are a fellowship of love.

“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honoring each other!” Romans 12:9-10 (NLT)

“No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.” 1 John 4:12 (NLT)

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT)

II. We remind ourselves of our fellowship with God and with each other by observing Holy Communion.

“When we bless the cup at the Lord’s Table, aren’t we sharing in the blood of Christ? And when we break the bread, aren’t we sharing in the body of Christ? And though we are many, we all eat from one loaf of bread, showing that we are one body.” 1 Corinthians 10:17-18 (NLT)

“On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.’ For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.”

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. How would you describe your relationship with other Christians? Are you closer or farther apart than you were when the pandemic began?
2. Define the word “fellowship” as a group. Then compare your definitions with one found in a Bible dictionary: “community, sharing, contributing partnership, or joint participation.” What was similar? What was different?
3. Read Matthew 22:39 & 1 John 4:12. Why was it important to Jesus that we have loving relationships with others?
4. Read Acts 2:42-47. How would you describe fellowship in the early church? How can we become more like them?
5. What do the following verses teach us about Christian fellowship?
 - Acts 1:8
 - Romans 12:9-10
 - 1 Corinthians 12:12-27
 - Galatians 5:1

When/where have you experienced this kind of fellowship?

6. Psalm 122:1 says, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD.’” How do you feel about returning to in-person worship?