

The Value Of Fellowship

Intro: As a basis for our study turn to Acts 4:23-37 ²³ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. ²⁴ And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: ²⁵ Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? ²⁶ The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. ²⁷ For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, ²⁸ For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. ²⁹ And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, ³⁰ By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. ³² And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. ³³ And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, ³⁵ And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. ³⁶ And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷ Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet." Surely one can easily establish the fact that there is great value in fellowship. There must be something afforded by fellowship or there is no great loss if it is withdrawn. Psa. 133:1-3 ¹ Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! ² *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; ³ As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore." testifies to the great value of fellowship, it is pictured as being worthwhile. In the verses before us the same is true.

I. IT AFFORDS SUITABLE COMPANIONSHIP.

- A. **Acts 4:23** ²³ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them."
- B. **People naturally go to their own company.**
 1. Old adage: "Birds of a feather flock together."
 2. Notice the homosexual community.
 3. 1 Cor. 15:33 ³³ Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."
- C. **Who are these people.**
 1. Peter and John.
 - a. Apostles of our Lord.
 - b. Jesus wanted them in the garden of Gethsemane; Mark 14:32-33 ³² And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. ³³ And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;"
 2. The *company*.
 - a. They were Christians.
 - (1) They were the called out by the Lord. 1 Pet. 2:9 ⁹ But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;"
 - (2) They had become followers of Christ; Acts 2:42 ⁴² And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"
 - b. They are the best people in town.
 - c. They would support the same thing.

II. IT PROVIDES SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT.

- A. Acts 4:23** ^{“23} And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.”
- B. These people were interested in Peter and John.**
1. They would listen.
 2. They desired to hear what Peter and John said.
- C. They are a family, a household.**
1. 1 Tim. 3:15 ^{“15} But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
 2. Gal. 6:10 ^{“10} As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
 3. Home, family, is where you go to find sympathy and support.
 - a. Where does a child go when he is hurt?
 - b. When a spouse is depressed where does he go?
- D. They constitute the body of Christ.**
1. Eph. 1:22-23 ^{“22} And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
 2. Col. 1:18 ^{“18} And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.”
 3. 1 Cor. 12:12-27
 - a. 1 Cor. 12:25-26 ^{“25} That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”
 - b. The body reacts with sympathy and support to other members of the body.
 - c. The one member is not left alone.
 - d. Phi. 2:3-4 ^{“3} *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”
- E. Acts 12:5** ^{“5} Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”
1. An example of this principle.
 2. There is no thought of Peter suffering alone.
 3. These support him by prayer.

III. IT MOTIVATES ONE SPIRITUALLY.

- A. Acts 4:24** ^{“24} And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:”
- B. There is not true of all fellowship and association.**
1. Some under these circumstances might say, “What we need is a good stiff drink.”
 2. Others would seek a mob to settle the matter.
 3. The people we associate with often controls what we do.
 4. 1 Cor. 15:33 ^{“33} Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”
- C. These turn to God in prayer.**
- D. Look at our worship.**
1. God is the center.
 - a. John 4:23-24 ^{“23} But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴ God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.”

- b. 1 Cor. 11:23 ²³ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread:”
- 2. Eph. 5:19 ¹⁹ Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”
- 3. Col. 3:16 ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
- E. **Heb. 10:24** ²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:”

IV. IT STRENGTHENS THOSE INVOLVED.

- A. **Acts 4:31** ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”
- B. **By this fellowship Peter and John were not weakened in right purposes.**
- C. **A great deal of fellowship weakens.**
 - 1. 1 Cor. 15:33 ³³ Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”
 - 2. Eph. 5:11 ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.”
 - 3. Thus when one is withdrawn from we are not to associate with that one.
 - a. 1 Cor. 5:9, 11 ⁹ I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:... ¹¹ But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”
 - b. Rom. 16:17 ¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”
 - c. 2 The. 3:6, 14 ⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us... ¹⁴ And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”
 - d. The reason: 1 Cor. 5:6 ⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?”
- D. **The right fellowship makes one stronger.**
 - 1. Pro. 27:17 ¹⁷ Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”
 - 2. Ecc. 4:9-12 ⁹ Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. ¹⁰ For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone*? ¹² And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”
 - 3. Rom. 1:11-12 ¹¹ For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; ¹² That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”
 - 4. John 19:38-40 ³⁸ And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹ And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. ⁴⁰ Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”
 - a. This was at the death of Christ.
 - b. No doubt Nicodemus and Joseph strengthened each other.

V. IT PROVOKES US TO SERVE.

- A. **Acts 4:32-37** ³² And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. ³³ And

with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, ³⁵And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. ³⁶And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet."

B. Inherent in fellowship or partnership.

1. There is a joint participation.
2. Something is demanded of us because we are partners.
 - a. 1 Cor. 3:9 ⁴⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building."
 - b. 2 Cor. 6:1 ⁴¹ We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

C. Some examples.

1. The family.
 - a. If your personal family was in need would it not demand that you do something?
 - b. The church is the family of God.
 - (1) 1 Tim. 3:15 ¹⁵ But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - (2) Gal. 6:10 ¹⁰ As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
2. Luke 5:7-10 ⁴⁷ And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. ⁸When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. ⁹For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: ¹⁰And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."
3. Acts 11:27-30 ²⁷ And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. ²⁸ And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. ²⁹ Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: ³⁰ Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

 - a. There was a need that arose.
 - b. They recognized that fellowship in the family of God demanded their help.

4. 2 Cor. 8:1-5 ⁴¹ Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; ² How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. ³ For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; ⁴ Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."
5. Num. 32:6 ⁴⁶ And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?"

D. Heb. 10:24 ²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:"

VI. IT PROMOTES A PROPER SPIRIT.

A. Acts 4:32 ³² And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

B. They would not allow themselves to become selfish.

1. Jam. 2:8, 15-16 ⁴⁸ If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:... ¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ And one of you

say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?"

2. 1 John 3:17 ⁴¹⁷ But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

C. Gen. 13

1. Trouble between Abraham's and Lot's herdsmen.
2. Gen. 13:8 ⁴⁸ And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren."
3. The basis of Abraham's proposal is "we be brethren" in verse 9 ⁴⁹ *Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*"
4. We need to have this attitude.
 - a. Within our congregation.
 - b. With sister congregations.

VII. IT SOLIDIFIES THOSE INVOLVED.

- A. Acts 4:23-32 ²³ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. ²⁴ And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: ²⁵ Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? ²⁶ The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. ²⁷ For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, ²⁸ For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. ²⁹ And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, ³⁰ By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. ³² And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

B. One heart and one soul.

1. Like minded—They think alike.
 - a. 1 Cor. 1:10 ¹⁰ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - b. 2 Cor. 13:11 ¹¹ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
 - c. Phi. 2:2 ² Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind."
 - d. Phi. 3:16 ¹⁶ Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
 - e. 1 Pet. 3:8 ⁸ Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:"
 - f. What is that mind?
 - (1) The mind of Christ; Phi. 2:5 ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"
 - (2) That mind is to do the Father's will.
 - (a) John 4:34 ³⁴ Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
 - (b) John 5:19, 30 ¹⁹ Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.... ³⁰ I can of mine own self

do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”

- (c) John 6:38 ^{“38} For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”
 - (d) Mat. 26:39 ^{“39} And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.”
- (3) Think according to what is written; 1 Cor. 4:6 ^{“6} And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”
- (a) Paul is referring to the words given by the Holy Spirit.
 - (b) 1 Cor. 2:13 ^{“13} Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”
 - (c) That is the Gospel or Scriptures.
 - (d) 1 Cor. 1:17-31
2. They feel alike.
- a. See points 2 and 6.
 - b. It is not a *they* proposition, but a *we* proposition.
 - c. Like football crowds: All will groan or rejoice together.

Conclusion: We, thus, can speak of the great value of fellowship. When we do we speak of a family functioning as one should, a body as one should. We are joint heirs with joint responsibilities and privileges. The loss of such would be disastrous.