

What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine

Ephesians 3:8-9

Introduction

- A. The subject of fellowship is a beautiful subject, yet it is an equally misunderstood subject as well.
 - 1. The beauty of biblical fellowship cannot be paralleled!
 - 2. Biblical fellowship extends beyond mere family-ship, food-ship, fun-ship and friendship: it is a relationship where both parties are in participation together to accomplish the greatest work in the world, to glorify God through the preaching and teaching of His word, the aid of the needy in His name and the edification of the household of God.
- B. The joy of fellowship is demonstrated in the verses we read during scripture reading; Paul considered it a great grace that he could call all men to see what that fellowship of the mystery is, the church - **Ephesians 3:8-11**
 - 1. Paul had preached on how God had reconciled all men unto himself (fellowship) through Christ in one body, the church
 - 2. This was a great mystery, but now is revealed: we can be part of that great household of God
- C. There are some strange ideas these days about the word fellowship.
 - 1. Some of it may be due to the definition Webster places on the word: "Companionship, company; a company of interest, activity, feeling, or experience; an association; a membership." - The last two are getting closer to the meaning than the first few.
 - 2. However, the Bible has a different definition of fellowship:
 - a) association, community, communion, joint participation
- D. Today we will want to notice the subject of fellowship

I. The Early Church Enjoyed the Fellowship Of Fellow Saints - Acts 2:42-47

- A. They Were Able To Do So Because They All Continued Steadfastly In The Apostles' Doctrine - 42
- B. Because All That Believed Were Together, And Had All Things Common - 44
- C. Because They All Continued Daily With One Accord - 46
- D. Because Of These Things, They Were Able To Accomplish Great Good:
 - 1. They were able to provide for the needy - 45
 - 2. They were able to endure persecution and take the Gospel to all parts of the world - Acts 8:4
 - 3. They built up the church through their fellowship with one another - 46
 - 4. They were able to glorify God through their fellowship - 47

II. The Mutual Relationship Of Members Of the Church

- A. We Are A Membership - Members Of A Body Work Together For The Good Of The Organism Or Organization!
 - 1. The world thinks of membership in terms of dues and participation - without it, you are not a member.
 - a. Every worldly organization exists for some purpose.
 - b. Every worldly organization with members are involved in some activities which promote their organization.
 - c. The strength of every worldly organization is its membership.
 - 2. In the Lord's church, Jesus Christ paid the dues for our membership and demands our

participation in carrying out the will of God concerning the church - **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**

- a. We are members by obeying the Spirit's teaching and being baptized
- b. We fulfill our duty in working together for the glory of God in the body
- c. There is to be no division in the body/membership of Christ
- d. We are to be one body, and members particularly

3. Like The Auto Insurance Company States, "Membership Has Its Rewards."

- a. Fellowship with those of like precious faith.
- b. Encouragement and edification to faithfulness.
- c. One hope of heavenly bliss in the after awhile.
- d. People who love and care about you as a member of the very household of God.

B. We Are A Brotherhood - Working Together For The Good Of The Family.

1. There is no greater word than that of family!
2. We Are To Treat One Another As Family
3. We Are To Love One Another As Family:

C. The Bible Also Describes The Church:

1. As Citizens In The Kingdom Of Heaven
2. As Fellow Workers In The Kingdom
3. As Soldiers Of Christ

III. 3 Portraits of True Christian Fellowship - Philippians 1:1-11

A. I have you in mind – 3-6

1. Thankfulness expressed – 3
2. Enjoyment – 4
3. Expectation – 6

B. I have you in my heart – 7-8

1. Through suffering – 7
2. Through a stand – 7
3. Through the Spirit – 8

C. I have you in my prayers – 9-11

1. For a mature love – 9
2. For continual growth – 10
3. For a righteous Fruit – 11

Conclusion

- A. Nothing Will Work Properly Without Cooperation - Illustration: For a car to take you where you are going, the battery has to give a charge to the starter, the spark plugs have to fire, the camshaft has to turn, the transmission has to power the drive shaft and the tires have to turn.
- B. For The Church To Work As God Desires It To Work, We Must All Cooperate - We Are A Cooperative Institution!
- C. Talk about CSG program