

9. COMMUNITY

—True Fellowship

After Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11) about 120 of his followers gathered together for prayer. Their first task was to select a 12th apostle, Matthias, to replace Judas Iscariot. Shortly thereafter, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon them with tongues of fire and they began to speak in other languages, the languages of the many ethnicities present in the crowd of people attracted to the miraculous presence of God. The apostle Peter brought clarity to the phenomenon by Biblically explaining the news of salvation. He said, “Repent, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord will call to Himself.” (Acts 2:38-39 NASB). About 3000 people responded to Peter’s message. The Church was born.

Everyone began “continually devoting themselves to the apostle’s teaching, and to *fellowship*, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42). So what is Biblical fellowship? Our English term *fellowship* comes from the Greek word *koinonia* which connotes an intimate community, or communion, of saints who share a common belief that God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, by and in the Holy Spirit welcomes humankind into His family by grace. This relationship is available to those who acknowledge the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and who confess His lordship in their lives. The household of faith, is related not only to the living God, but also to one another, as members of a spiritual family.

What do we learn about the source of fellowship from the following passages:

I John 1:1-10

I Corinthians 1:9

Colossians 1:18-20

In the Book of Acts we see the foundational expressions of Christian fellowship. What do you observe?

Acts 1:8,14

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 4:32-35

Acts 6:1-7

Acts 8:1-4

Acts 9:31

A related idea of *koinonia* is “sharing in common”. What and how are we to share in common?

Galatians 6:2,6

Colossians 3:16

I Thessalonians 2:8

James 5:16

I John 4:11,21

What do we learn about the life of the body from I Corinthians 12:1-31?

APPLICATION: As you reflect on this idea of Biblical fellowship what is your assessment of where you are at personally? What fears or inhibitions do you have? Are there spiritual wounds you have experienced that need to be healed? Are there responsibilities within the body of Christ that you need to embrace? Take some time to reflect in your journal as how you desire to grow in this area of true fellowship.