

Today's Order of Worship

Announcements: Greg Lowery

Song Leader: David Key

Opening Prayer: Billy Box

On the Table: Head - Greg Lowery
Servers - Bradley Box
Josh Berryhill
Blake Eddy

Closing Prayer: Ralph Burleson

Preparing the Lord's Supper Mary Eddy

Weekly Service Times

Sunday

Bible Study 10:00 am

Morning Worship 10:45 am

Evening Worship 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:00 pm

Visit Our Website

www.brilliantchurchofchrist.org

Elders: Deacons: Al Corkren / Josh Berryhill

David Key / Billy Box

Eddie Dickinson

Minister: Greg Lowery

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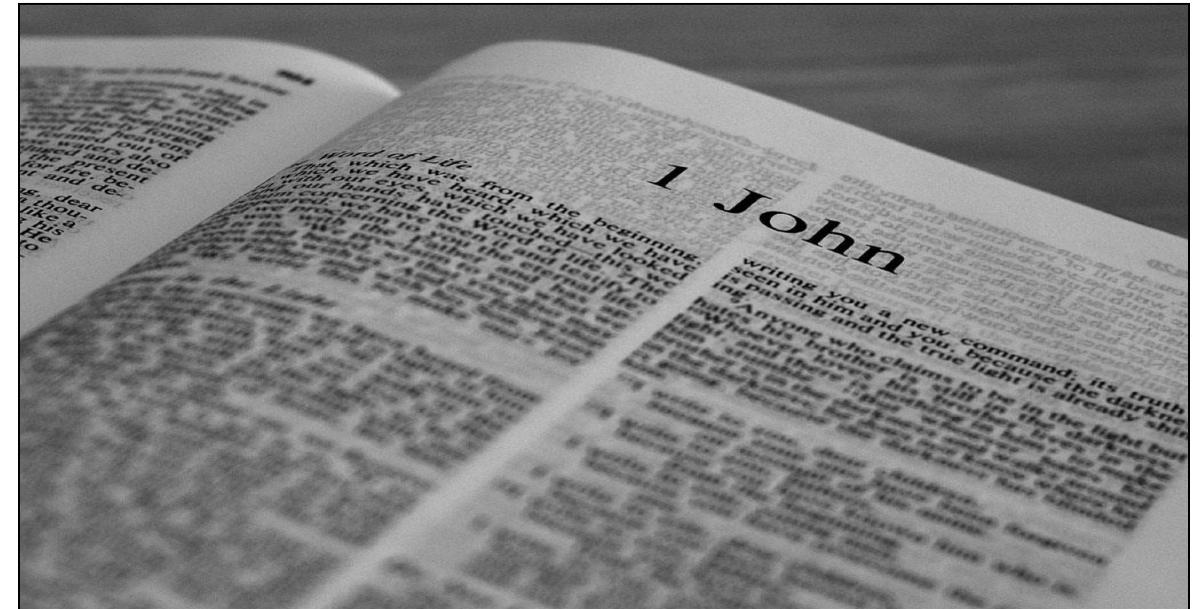
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Fellowship With God



*The
Brilliant
Beacon*



The New Testament Church Is Divine In Fellowship

By Louis Rushmore

Biblical fellowship should be the only spiritual fellowship in which the people of God have the least interest. Furthermore, the definition of fellowship which can be gleaned from Scripture is the only definition sanctioned by God, and the only fellowship which will carry any weight in judgment. Isn't it, therefore, rather pointless to subscribe to a counterfeit definition of fellowship, which can only mislead man now and certainly condemn him in eternity?

However, does the Bible (and especially the New Testament or Gospel) clearly define biblical fellowship? Further, granting a Scriptural definition exists, is it necessary to accept and practice that fellowship? With whom may one have fellowship, and under what conditions (or are there any conditions)? Are there also others with whom the children of God are forbidden to practice fellowship? What does the Bible teach concerning the subject of fellowship? There are books devoted to the biblical doctrine of fellowship, so the following is obviously only an abbreviated examination of this topic.

It is this writer's firm conviction and understanding of Scripture that biblical fellowship must be established and maintained with God, and with those who are in fellowship with God. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

Further, man is wholly unauthorized to redefine fellowship or extend it to those outside the scope of the biblical definition. The beginning of one's familiarity with God, a relationship with him, or understanding what God requires of mankind lies with faithful and regular consultation with the inspired Word of God. Implementation follows consultation. Faithfulness culminates consultation and implementation, and will result in a heavenly hereafter with God. Following Bible teaching (doctrine) leads to fellowship with God and those who are likewise in fellowship with God, and, in turn, brings about biblical unity as well. Bible doctrine, genuine fellowship and true unity are inseparable companions!

THOSE WHO NEED OUR PRAYERS

Lannie & Glenda Key: be praying for both of them during this difficult time

Mary Rainey: has bone cancer throughout her body, please be praying for her and her family

Jimmie Ann Hardy {Carolyn's Sister} is in the nursing home in Guin, pray for her she has some ongoing health issues

Joey Colburn: is taking treatments for cancer, please pray that the treatments will be successful in defeating his cancer

Angie Ganey Gardner: fighting against breast cancer, please pray that this cancer will be defeated

Shauna Silas: diagnosed with thyroid cancer, please be praying that with treatments this cancer will be defeated

Mary Box: some ongoing other health problems, please keep her in your prayers

Celia Grace Hamlett, daughter of Gary and Kassie Hamlett, she is home and doing better, thank you for your prayers

Wayne Sherry (Arlen's old boss): currently fighting cancer; pray that this cancer can be controlled and defeated

Guy Weeks: is undergoing cancer treatments, please pray that this cancer will be defeated

Maddie Bishop (young girl South Haleyville) diagnosed with stage 4 Ewing sarcoma, please pray for her and her family and that treatments can defeat this cancer

Hayden Lackey: is currently taking med's to control his seizures, let us be praying that the med's will work

THOSE WHO NEED OUR PRAYERS

Billy Lee {Carolyn’s Brother} he is in renal failure, is back at the nursing home in Guin, please be praying for him and the staff caring for him

Timmy Weeks: is planning on having total shoulder replacement surgery, let us be praying that it will be done without any complications

Danny Berryhill: diagnosed with thickness of the heart, please be praying that doctors can successfully help him with this problem

Bill Berryhill: dealing with cancer found new spot on his kidney, please be praying that his battle with cancer can be controlled and won

Mason Estes: he is need of a liver transplant; please be keeping him and his family in your prayers

Judy Barker (David Barker’s Mother): she had been diagnosed with bone and lung cancer; please keep her and her family in your prayers

Kristi White: diagnosed with cancer affecting her esophagus, stomach and other areas taking treatments at MD Anderson, please pray this cancer will be defeated

Austin Carter (Travis Garrison’s Nephew): scans found a mass on his thyroid, please be praying that this does not turn out to be a serious problem

Spence Berryhill: recently had surgery for Melanoma, please be praying that all was removed

Hugh Martin: he is dealing with a broken hip and some other ongoing health problems, please pray that he will get strong enough for surgery

Deborah Pollard: she is dealing with cancer, please be praying that this cancer is treatable and that it can be defeated

Necessary to Practice Biblical Fellowship

Led by the inspired apostles of Christ, the early church followed the doctrine (Gospel or New Testament) delivered to them and practiced fellowship with one another and God (Acts 2:42). Yes, it is not only desirous, but necessary that the New Testament church, regardless of in which century it exists, practice biblical fellowship. This is not an optional, but an obligatory matter. Whatever God requires of his creation is possible. The New Testament does describe Christian fellowship; it can be understood; and, this fellowship can be practiced accordingly.

Any attempt to alter the teaching (doctrine) of the Gospel assures the malfunction of true fellowship, a breach of fellowship with God and those who are in fellowship with God (Galatians 1:6-9; 1 John 1:6, 7; 2 John 9-11). The only basis of biblical fellowship is the wholehearted acknowledgment of Bible doctrine. Fellowship must not be imagined to be limited to merely mental registration of Bible subjects (e.g., the seven ones of Ephesians 4:4-6), but certainly requires the adoption of what Scripture teaches about them, too.

Fellowship Linked to Discipleship

First, fellowship is a condition of discipleship; "Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16). Fellowship of the Gospel also resulted in common discipleship between the Philippian church and the apostle Paul (Philippians 1:5). It is equally true that discipleship is a condition of fellowship. Therefore, when Gentiles became disciples, they enjoyed fellowship with God and other disciples (Christians). "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Ephesians 3:6). Unless one is truly a disciple or Christian, he cannot entertain fellowship with God and those who are in fellowship with God, and this fellowship is the calculated result of "fellowship in the Gospel" (Philippians 1:5). Biblical fellowship does not exist in spite of the Gospel (teaching, doctrine), but as a result of it.

Fellowship Involves Laboring Together for God

Today, the subject of fellowship among brethren is often reduced to the consideration of a common meal together. However, biblically, comparatively few passages address this kind of fellowship (e.g., Acts 2:46). Perhaps more passages that pertain to fellowship depict it as working together for the Lord than any other activity. In this vein, Paul referred to Timothy as his "workfellow" (Romans 16:21) and Titus as his

"fellowhelper" (2 Corinthians 8:23). The Apostle named Clement among his "fellowlabourers" (Philippians 4:3), others of whom specifically designated as such were Timothy (1 Thessalonians 3:2; Philippians 1:1) Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas and Lucas (Philemon 24). Justus was styled a fellowworker in the kingdom of God (Colossians 4:11).

The activity in which fellowship involves laboring together for God primarily attends to being "fellowhelpers to the truth" (3 John 8). Scripture further describes fellowship among early Christians with these appellations: Epaphras and Tychicus were called fellowservants (Colossians 1:7, 4:7) among others (Revelation 6:11; 19:10; 22:9). It is written of Epaphroditus that he was Paul's "companion in labour, and fellowsoldier" (Philippians 2:25), and Apphia and Archippus are also called fellowsoldiers, (Philippians 1:2). To exercise fellowship in spiritual labors makes each participant a "true yokefellow" (Philippians 4:3).

Fellowship May Involve Suffering

Under the prevailing hostility toward the church in the first century, fellowship in the Gospel resulted in some becoming fellowprisoners (Romans 16:7; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 23). Not desirous by any means, however, the communion and partnership involved in biblical fellowship sometimes manifests itself among faithful brethren as the fellowship of sufferings (Philippians 3:10).

Fellowship Occurs in Worship

Though not limited to worship, biblical fellowship is enjoyed among Christians when they worship God. The Greek word for fellowship (koinonia) is translated "communion" and applied to the Lord's Supper; "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16). Four verses later, the same Greek word is translated "fellowship" and applied to the relationship which exists between the worshipper and the worshipped (1 Corinthians 10:20).

Giving is another side of worship in which fellowship results between man and God and between fellow Christians. Several Scriptures translate the Greek word for fellowship to "communicate" and apply it to giving (Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:14, 15; 1 Timothy 6:18; Hebrews 13:16). Giving is also called fellowship in 2 Corinthians 8:4.

Fellowship Inclusive and Exclusive

There are some with whom the children of God are forbidden to practice biblical fellowship. This is clear from at least two passages: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). The word "communion" in 2 Corinthians 6:14 comes from the Greek word for fellowship; this text asks a rhetorical question, the answer to which is "None at all!" Both verses emphatically teach that no true fellowship can exist between camps wherein one holds to truth and the other does not. Not only so, but cordial association with sinners often leads to the corruption of the saints (1 Corinthians 15:33). Christian fellowship is described as "fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9); "fellowship of the Spirit" (Philippians 2:1); fellowship with the Father (1 John 1:3); "fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:7); the apostles' "right hands of fellowship" (Galatians 2:9) and "fellowship in the Gospel" (Philippians 1:5). Biblical fellowship is reserved for those who do the truth and walk in the light (1 John 1:6-7); these souls alone receive the blessing of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

Conclusion

Counterfeit fellowship will offer no consolation in eternity; it behooves us, therefore, to opt for only biblical fellowship now. We are not left to wonder about the nature of fellowship, for the Bible amply describes it. Biblical fellowship must be established and maintained with God, and with those who are in fellowship with God. Bible doctrine, genuine fellowship and true unity are inseparable companions; new definitions are extra-biblical, corrupt doctrine and taint fellowship and unity. Further, the fellowship God authorizes is not optional, but obligatory. Far be it from God's faithful children to endeavor to extend "koinonia" beyond the scope of its Scriptural definition, hence assuring a malfunction and breach of true fellowship. The limits of fellowship include a divine relationship with God and those who also entertain the same relationship with God; all others are excluded from this magnificent relationship. Fellowship is as much a condition of discipleship as discipleship is a condition of fellowship. Genuine fellowship is also the outgrowth of the practice of Bible doctrine. It manifests itself through laboring in the Gospel, suffering with the children of God and worship.

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