

# Fellowship

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## I. Introduction.

- A. Rockefeller said the greatest thing in the world is Christian fellowship.
- B. Fellowship begins by engaging people with whom we feel a warm personal affinity, but it is only the first step.

## II. Biblical Fellowship.

- A. Fellowship comes from the Greek word *koinonia*. (1 John 1:7)
- B. Biblical scenarios: communing more than conversing, sharing thoughts and challenges, partners sharing in leadership.

## III. Ideas on fellowship.

- A. Wesley formed community in order to conform men to the image of Christ.
  - 1. He expected the groups to be small.
  - 2. He expected the members to be transparent about faults.
- B. Dr. Sam Shoemaker's fellowship.
  - 1. It must be Christ centered with Christ centered people. The leader must build up and there must not be a spirit of one-upmanship.
  - 2. There must be the principle of concern for the members of the group. This should manifest itself in deep relationship.
  - 3. There must be candor—honesty throughout with love.
  - 4. There must be a principle of the cell group. The number one cause of missionaries returning is their inability to get along with other missionaries. Christ-like character is manifested in groups.
  - 5. There must be a principle of common cause. We are to look forward to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Fellowship is never the end, but a means to the end.
- C. Pastor Dick Woodbert's eight point covenant.
  - 1. A covenant of love that is unconditional.
  - 2. A covenant of community. This is availability to each other.

3. A covenant of prayer for one another. The example of the man who had a needed list of children's names who were left during the exit of the China Inland Mission because he prayed for them all by name.
4. A covenant of confidentiality.
5. A covenant of openness.
6. A covenant of sensitivity. A promise to listen to others in word, action, or attitude.
7. A covenant of honesty. We are to be open about telling when we agree or disagree.
8. A covenant of accountability.

#### IV. Practical application.

A. The first part of *koinonia* means common.

B. Condensed steps.

1. Meet once a week and be accountable to each other with two.
2. Pray for one another.
3. As you are more comfortable with each other, be open about struggles.
4. Pray about adding another to the group. Be sensitive about the chemistry in the group.

C. Advantages of being in a fellowship group.

1. When two or more people get right with each other revival breaks out.
2. A Christian leader had a moral failure because he was not in a mutual accountability group.
3. Three men in fellowship are tightly bound together. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)
4. Fellowship is just as important as Bible study and prayer.

#### V. Discussion.

A. A group needs to start one at a time slowly so that chemistry can come together.

B. Fellowship groups are a step beyond simple Bible study or prayer groups because there is an accountability factor missing.

C. Mixed gender fellowship can be valuable, but separated gender fellowship is still needed to go deeper.

D. Fellowship with Navigator founder Dawson Trotman was beneficial—he was always frank about his concerns.

**Application questions.**

1. How did the speaker summarize and condense the diversity of ideas on how to do fellowship?

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2. Why does the speaker say it is important to start a fellowship group slowly? Do you agree? Why or why not?

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3. Do you have a fellowship group that you are a part of? If so, does it share some of the characteristics described? What can you do to improve its state? If not, what can you do to be a part of other people's lives.

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