

Fellowship

#7

John Donne said, “No man is an island.” We realize the idea that we need other people in our lives, but when it comes to the Christian experience, many people keep it hidden & private. We often relegate spiritual matters to the silent & secret parts of life.

To admit that we don’t have our spiritual acts together seems like a shameful admission of ignorance & weakness. But let’s face it. Who really has their act together? Richard Foster, in *The Celebration of Discipline*, says that what keeps us from true fellowship is a wrong perspective on the body: we see it as a gathering of saints, before we recognize it as a group of sinners. We think that everyone else has arrived at a point of saintly holiness & spiritual perfection, so we are ashamed by our growth – or lack of it. But no one is perfect. We are all fallen, and we need each other.

Why do we need each other? As bones need ligaments to connect & support, and the body needs skin to protect the tender & squishy parts, so we need one another for connection, support & protection.

Gathering with other believers benefits us with: encouragement when we need a dose of courage, teaching to educate us about God & the Bible, and correction when we are spiritually sluggish or off-base.

Biblical Perspective: Practice saying your memory verse (**Acts 2:42**) together.

Read Acts 2:42-47

What were some of the highlights of their fellowship together? _____

In what ways have you experienced these? _____

Read Hebrews 10:24-25

It seems people have always been in the habit of not wanting to meet together. What makes you sometimes not want to spend time in fellowship? _____

What is the worst part for you? _____

Read Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-16

Here Paul tells us how incredibly valuable fellowship is and how each member of God’s family has a role to play in the body.

When you think of our fellowship, where do we mirror God’s Kingdom? What is lacking? _____

Read 1 Corinthians 12

Obviously, there is much to be gained from the gifts and ministry others offer.

How does God seem to use you? _____

What do you uniquely add that others would miss if you weren't part of the ministry? _____

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian who was killed by the Gestapo, wrote the following about the value of fellowship & community:

“... the Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again & again when he becomes uncertain & discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth. He needs his brother man as a bearer & proclaimer of the divine word of salvation. He needs his brother solely because of Jesus Christ. The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure.”

How have you experienced someone speaking life into you? _____

When have you spoken life into someone else? _____

How can fellowship help one grow in Christ? _____

Memorize: Acts 2:42