

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRISTIANS

1 John 4:11,21

Galatians 6:2

Galatians 6:6

James 5:16

3. Recall an incident when you were reluctant to allow someone to share something with you. Did your attitude hinder his attempt at sharing? If so, how?

Sharing involves giving and receiving, and both are integral parts of meaningful fellowship.

4. Christians fellowship together on the basis of the fact that they are forgiven sinners—forgiven, yes, but still sinners. Knowing this fact, what is your responsibility toward your brother when you have offended him? *Matthew 5:22-24*

(*Raca* is a term expressing contempt for someone.)

What is your responsibility when he has offended you? *Matthew 18:15,35*

Christians can honestly share their lives. You don't have to pretend to be something you are not.

“Accept life with humility and patience, generously making allowances for each other because you love each other. Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you will be bound together in peace. There is one Body and one Spirit, just as it was to one hope that you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is the one over all, the one working through all and the one living in all.”

EPHESIANS 4:2-6, PH

WHAT IS BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP?

1. Read 1 John 3:1. If you are God's child and he is the Father of all, what does this tell you about your relationship to other believers?

2. “Fellowship” is derived from the Greek word *koinonia*, which means “sharing in common.” God has given you much to share. As you examine the following verses, determine what you can share with others and one practical way to share it.

5. Picture the following situation. Several Christians are in the same room drinking coffee and eating doughnuts as they discuss last week's championship game. The conversation moves to the subject of "which animal makes the best household pet." Then one of them tells a joke he recently heard. They enjoy a good laugh together and begin to talk about the weather forecast for tomorrow. As one of them leaves, he says, "It sure is good to have Christian fellowship!"

- a. Is this genuine Christian fellowship? _____
- b. Why or why not? _____
- c. Could it be improved? How? _____

THE PURPOSE OF FELLOWSHIP

6. Why is fellowship important?
Proverbs 27:17 _____
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 _____

7. What is the purpose of meeting together as believers?
Hebrews 10:24-25 _____

8. In studying a verse, it is often helpful to locate other verses elsewhere in the Bible which relate directly to the one being examined. The other verses are called *cross-references*. Hebrews 3:13 is a cross-reference to Hebrews 10:24-25. From this cross-reference, why is it necessary to encourage one another daily?

- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
9. Explain why fellowship is important to you.
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

THE BODY OF CHRIST

10. God uses the analogy of a body to describe the relationship of believers with one another and with Christ. Who is the head of the body? Why? *Colossians 1:18*

- _____
- _____
- _____

11. Each believer is given different but important responsibilities in this spiritual body, the church. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.

- a. Who gave the members their various functions? *Verse 18*
- b. What is his desire? *Verse 25*

c. What attitudes can lead to disharmony in the body?
Verses 15-16,21

d. Are there any unnecessary functions (members) in the body?
Verses 20-22

12. Think of what happens when you hit your finger with a hammer. How does this affect the entire body?

How can this illustration relate to the spiritual body?

1 Corinthians 12:26

13. The body works together as one unit, yet it has many specialized organs which perform diverse functions. Summarize in a few sentences how both unity and diversity can exist together in the body.

14. According to Ephesians 4:2-3, what will preserve unity in the body?

15. Examine your attitudes toward other Christians. Is there someone you find difficult to relate to in love as another member of Christ's body? Why?

What steps can you take to bring harmony to your relationship with this individual?

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

PSALM 133:1

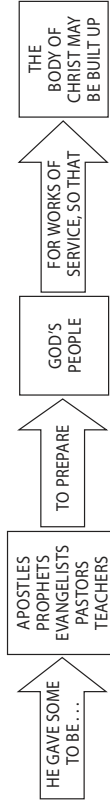
THE LOCAL CHURCH

16. What activities of the church in Jerusalem are mentioned in Acts 2:42?

Three distinguishing marks of the early church were:
(1) GENEROSITY (2) PRAYER (3) POWER

17. Read Ephesians 4:11-13. Who is to equip (perfect) the saints so they can do the work of the ministry?

What is the ultimate goal of Christian ministry? *Verse 13*



18. Examine 1 Peter 5:1-5. This passage gives direction to the leaders and members of a “flock.” Using the following chart, contrast the right and wrong ways of demonstrating leadership. *Verses 2-3*

RIGHT WAY	WRONG WAY

What is your responsibility to your spiritual elders? *Verse 5*

19. In Colossians 4:3-4, Paul requested prayer for his ministry.
a. Paraphrase his request.

b. Stop for a moment and use this request as a basis for praying for another Christian. Record the person's name here.

c. What is one thing you can do during this coming week to encourage those who are helping you walk with Christ?

20. What instructions are you given concerning the support of those who are appointed to preach and teach?
1 Corinthians 9:11, 14

Are you presently giving back to God part of what he is giving to you? What does God want you to do with regard to prayer and financial support for your spiritual leaders?

“Each Christian should select his church because he is convinced that within its particular structure he will find the greatest opportunities for spiritual growth, the greatest satisfactions for his human needs, and the greatest chance to be of helpful service to those around him.”

BILLY GRAHAM⁶

Remember These Points

- Genuine fellowship is based on the concept of giving to and receiving from other Christians. You can share with others whatever God has given you—forgiveness, possessions, love, his Word, and many other things.
- God gives fellowship for the purpose of mutual encouragement and growth.
- He wants Christians to live in unity and harmony with one another. To help us understand how believers are related, God uses the analogy of the body. Jesus Christ is the head of the body, which is comprised of all believers.
- All Christians throughout the world belong to Christ's body, but it is important for you to recognize how God wants you to be related to a smaller, specific group of believers. This smaller group is for the purpose of instruction, sharing, worship, and service. God has given spiritual leaders to help you mature in Christ and to become effective in the ministry.

⁶ From *Peace with God* (New York: Doubleday, 1953), 177–178.