

Fellowship of the Saints

Introduction:

We are presently experiencing a clash of cultures where our old culture is changing rapidly. I believe it is God weeding and pruning His earthly garden to allow His Spiritual Kingdom to emerge. It's hard to hold onto anything that is historically stable. The family has been declining along with many other bedrock institutions like schools and churches. The main issue is that of declining relationships. The core issue is that families of people used to live in communities sharing a common culture that overcame life's struggles together. The problems of life are eating up our communities by increasing rancor and further dividing the culture we all once shared.

We all need transparent open and deeply personal relationships based on respect, trust and goodwill. Our society is based on a Christian world view. That basis of life is almost completely gone. As a result, we live lives in quiet desperation filled with anxiety, mistrust, and confusion. Changes overwhelm us and threaten to undo us completely. We all need relationships that in combination together transcend this earthly cesspool. Our present preoccupation with social or business activities provide little time for personal contact with others. We tend to turn to abstract relationships with virtual people, things, or animals. Without intimate relationships our inner needs can never be met. We all need to be loved and to love others! We are designed to be personally connected by relationship with God, His creation and one another. As Christians we all need the resurrected Christ as our constant companion.

We as followers of Christ are adopted into God's family and enjoy the blessings of His Kingdom. Living in that family we can enjoy the love God has given each of us to share. This can only be shared in open and transparent relationships that are filled with trust. The challenges and changes we face today are best met together where Christ is the head and the heart of our life together. In a way we need to have the Logos in our hearts instead of a logo on our chest. True authentic godliness trumps earthly, worldly substitutes for what we stand for in our divisive world. Life is not a competition. In other words, we need to make a commitment to fellowship with God and one another so that as one harmonious body we face the world that lives without God, by living with Christ.

It's time to invest more of our resources toward building fellowship groups in our lives so that Christ may create a culture of faith amid the culture of death in which we live.

A. Fellowship is the developing relationship we have with God and one another that reveals Christ's Kingdom to the world.

- a. We have God's love to the degree that we love one another.

1John 4:20 *If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.*

- b. Our walk with God is revealed by the way we walk with one another.

1John 1:6-7 *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Only in true fellowship with God is real fellowship with one another possible. Fellowship only exists when all parties are walking in the light of Christ together. Leave God out and we have a friendship that is earthbound. With God, all are dwelling as a family in God.

- c. Webster’s Dictionary (1913). Bacon **Fel’low·ship**, *n.* [Fellow + -ship.]
 1. The state or relation of being (life).
 2. Companionship of persons on equal and friendly terms; frequent and familiar contact.

Fellowship is the state of being in constant, transparent, open, and growing relationship among two or more people.

κοινωνία, ας, ἡ

1. **close association (intimacy) involving mutual interests and sharing, *association, communion, fellowship, close relationship*** (hence a favorite expr. for the marital relationship as the most intimate between human beings).
2. **attitude of good will that manifests an interest in a close relationship, *generosity, mutual affection, altruism (self-sacrifice)*** – feelings of mutual closeness.
3. ***participation, sharing*** – walking together in harmony.

B. Fellowship requires a commitment to God and others.

- a. Fellowship is diving deeper into the bottomless pool of eternal relationships.

KNOW BY NAME	KNOW SOME INTERESTS, CONCERNS	KNOW PERSONAL DESIRES, GOALS, ACHIEVEMENTS	KNOW PERSONAL NEEDS, TRIALS, JOYS, HEARTACHES
<i>ACQUAINTANCE</i>	<i>CASUAL FRIENDSHIP</i>	<i>CLOSE FRIENDSHIP</i>	<i>INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP</i>
WAVE	HANDSHAKE	SHARING FUN TIMES	SHARING DEEP EMOTIONS
Address by first name.	Spend casual social time together.	Develop mutual social interest	Agree to be 24-hour-a-day-friends.
Ask of home, family and livelihood.	Begin challenging discussions that reveal beliefs, strengths and weaknesses	Include family members in activities together.	Be mutually involved in each other’s family, friends and events.
Ask questions that spark memories.	Ask about hopes and desires.	Ask about personal goals and offer to help achieve them together.	Confront ungodly character traits in each other in Christ.
Show interest with total acceptance	Be attentive to any problems shared.	Be sensitive to mood swings that signal problems – show interest by listening, helping and praying.	Share Scripture and prayer during regular, planned moments.
	Be transparent about own issues.	Offer to pray together regularly for concerns.	Look for way to help each other without being asked.
	Be open about family, friends, aspirations and general interests.	Share Scripture that implements and complements.	Be there for each other in “thick and thin”.
	Offer to pray for pertinent issues.		
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- b. Fellowship begins with God.

Acts 17:28 *“In him we live and move and have our being.”*

James 4:4 *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Fellowship with God

Knowledge of His will for our lives.	Job 22:21; John 17:3
God’s love binds all.	Romans 8:38-39
Joy in His Presence.	Psalms 4:6
Conformity to His image.	1 John 2:6: 1:6
Recipient of God’s great happiness and joy.	1 John 1:3-4; Ephesians 3:14-21

- c. Fellowship is realized in our commitment to one another that realizes the Kingdom of God in our lives.
- d. The basic ingredients consist of our devotional life with God.
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Worship
 - iii. Scripture
 - iv. Devotional materials we’ve accumulated.
 - v. Spiritual life from within.

Fellowship with One Another

The mutual relationship we have with God.	1 Cor. 1:9
It is sustained by the Holy Spirit.	2 Cor. 13-14; Phil 2:1
Work together using God’s gifts to pray and serve one another.	Rom. 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; 1 Thess. 5:17-18
Intentionally meet to supply each other’s needs.	Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:46
Share in grace, love, joy during life’s moments.	Mal. 3:16; 2 Cor. 8:4
Share mutual interest as a body both spiritual and temporal needs.	Rom. 12:4, 13; Heb. 13:16
Share in sufferings.	Rom. 15:1, 2; Gal. 6:1, 2; Rom. 12:15
Share in glory.	Rev. 7:9

- e. This fellowship includes all we share with God but adds our individual spiritual wisdom and knowledge that God has given us. We see the Kingdom come through discipleship.

C. Fellowship is available here at TNT and if not pray it into existence.

- a. Home Groups are popping up everywhere.
 - i. Our home group on Tuesday nights.
 - ii. Other groups will be announced in the coming weeks.

- b. Women's prayer group at Carol Soucy
- c. Women's groups, mother's groups and occasional men's groups.
- d. What you want but don't see.
 - i. Pray that God will show you whom you could start what you are looking for.
 - ii. Advertise what you want to do and call others to join you.
 - iii. Use you network of friends to get started.

Conclusion: We all need each other in the bond of fellowship to establish His eternal Kingdom culture that overcomes the death culture of this world.