

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
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“True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia”¹

Lesson 4: Fellowship and Community

Goal: To learn what true community is and to practice Biblical Koinonia

Objective: To experience the spiritual community where members share a common life in Jesus Christ.

Scripture: *“so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Roman 12: NIV)*

True fellowship (Koinonia) is very vital for the growth and maturity of the church today. As believers we have a common life together in Christ and that places us in community with each other. However, our Christian community is not restricted to location or membership of a particular congregation, but it expresses the spiritual organic relationship we have with Christ and fellow believers in the entire universe². Our Christian fellowship, which is our (Biblical Application of Koinonia) is objective and should motivate us to share our personal experiences we have with God with one another. This will help strengthen our brothers and sisters as well as deepen our relationship with God. All Christians are part of the body of Christ. The church body has many members with different functions, but should seek to maintain spiritual unity that will bring honor to God. Just as the human body has many different parts (e.g. eye, ear, hand and foot and etc.), they all work synergistically. One part cannot function effectively without the other.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12)

This month’s lesson will emphasize the biblical practice of *koinonia* through spiritual fellowship with people who share a common life in Jesus Christ. We often encounter many people throughout day-to-day activities without acknowledging that we share a common life in Jesus Christ. Our personal relationships with the Lord ought to be valued and seen by others as a light in a dark world rather than something we cherish in privacy and keep withheld. We must distinguish ourselves among the people of God by modeling Christlikeness according to our own personalities with a willingness to be recognizable because of our common relationship with Christ. Jesus tells us, *“You are the light of the world.... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14, 16 NKLV)* Our lights get brighter as we join with other lights.

¹ Bridges, Jerry. True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia. Colorado Springs, CO, NavPress (2012) Print.

² Bridges, Jerry. True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia. Colorado Springs, CO, NavPress (2012) Print. Pg. 50

Love and Care for One Another

When we as a Christ-centered community of believers truly apply the principles of Koinonia, this should compel us to love and care for one another. As we seek to care for one another this involves being an encourager. Paul states that all parts of the body should have equal concern for each other³.

“that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. (1 Corinthian 12:25)

Honor One Another

Yes, our fellowship should be characterized by concern and care instead of condemnation and criticism, but we should go even a step further.⁴ It is not only what we should not do, but what we ought to *do* proactively as we join with others in our endeavors to fulfill His will in relationship to other believers. We rejoice when other parts of the body of Christ is honored because we are *spiritually* joined and that honor is extended to the body of Christ. Paul teaches us that we must learn to “honor one another above ourselves.” (*Romans 12:10*).

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; [a]give preference to one another in honor; (Roman 12:10)

Reprove One Another

We will experience the need and have opportunities to reprove one another. As we do so, we ought to pray and express genuine concern in a loving caring manner rather than expressing self-righteousness or a tone of criticism and condemnation. Even when one may have fallen into a sin trap, we must be careful not to criticize or condemn, but move with compassion to help restore our brother.

“Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.....” (Galatians 6:1)

Pray for One Another

Finally, we must pray constantly without ceasing. We all know that prayer changes things. However, our prayers should not always be focused solely on ourselves, but our prayers should include the entire church body and its particular concerns. As the church body grows and matures, we will have a stronger spiritual community where members can evangelize to the unsaved and disciple the saved.

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16)

³ Bridges, Jerry. True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia. Colorado Springs, CO, NavPress (2012) Print. Pg. 51

⁴ *ibid*

Discussion Question #1:

What is your response to the idea of rejoicing in the growth of another just as you would want others to rejoice in your growth?

Discussion Question #2:

As we share a common life in Jesus Christ what are a few biblical models that can help us experience fellowship through Christ- centered spiritual community?

Points to Ponder:

What does it mean to you to use the metaphor, *the body of Christ*, to acknowledge fellow believers?

Helpful Scripture Passages:

1 Corinthian 12: Romans 12: Ephesians 4:

Closing Prayer:

Father, as we seek to grow in the true meaning of biblical fellowship help us to experience Your blessings as we share our common life with You among other believers. Enable us to grow in patience, love, and longsuffering instead of criticism and condemnation. Lord we pray that we cooperate with and honor each other recognizing that when one part of the body is honored we all rejoice, because we are a part of that same body. May we always seek to restore those who may be offensive or whose actions are of concern, understanding that we should always sincerely pray for each other. Lord we submit ourselves to the guidance of Your Holy Spirit for this growth for Your glory. In Jesus Name we pray! Amen!

Monthly Biblical Lessons

Month	Year	Monthly Biblical Lessons
October	2013	Introduction – True Community
November	2013	Union with God
December	2013	Communion with God
January	2014	Fellowship and Community