

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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Detroit, Michigan 48208
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“True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia”¹

Lesson 9- Supporting Your Local Ministry

Goal: To learn what true community is and to practice biblical-based *Koinonia*.

Lesson Objective: To experience *koinonia* by supporting lay people, local ministers and pastors who teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: “Anyone who receives instructions in the word must share all good things with his instructor. (Galatians 6:6)

Overview

We have learned over the past months that a basic meaning of *koinonia* as a relationship is a sharing together of the common life we have in Christ. One of the principle expressions of *koinonia* is to share what we have with others.² This month’s lesson emphasizes the practice of biblical-based *Koinonia* by supporting our local pastor, lay people and ministries. The pastor, lay people and other ministers provide invaluable support and instructions to aid people in building their relationship with the Lord according to the Scripture. How can anyone place a monetary price on such a magnificent purpose? Author, Jerry Bridges, acknowledges a deacon’s statement about the pastor this way: “What a refreshingly different viewpoint from the all-too-common one that puts great emphasis on the church building while neglecting or inadequately seeing to the care of those who make our church buildings valuable.”³ In essence, our pastor, assistant pastors, and serving ministers, deacons, deaconesses, and trustees along with other hardworking church members are our most valuable assets over the beautiful edifice that God has allowed us to worship in and serve Him.

Failure to acknowledge pastors, ministers and lay people who prepare to teach and preach the gospel create feelings of indifference among the church family and minimize the sharing of heartfelt experiences and new insights that enable spiritual growth throughout the church. *Koinonia* is an expression of a sharing relationship. Paul’s letter to the Galatians teaches; “Anyone who receives instructions in the Word must share all good things with his instructor. (Galatian 6:6) Our appreciation from the momentum gained from learning and hearing the Word of God should prompt a natural response to give and share our possessions with the instructors of the Word.

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

² Ibid, p. 120.

³ Ibid, page 119

SHARING WITH OUR TEACHERS

Paul places a strong emphasis on reciprocal sharing. “Anyone who receives instruction in the w Word . . . : that is, those who are taught the Scriptures have a duty to care for the material needs of those who labor in teaching. This is another New Testament expression of fellowship.⁴ The value we place on earthly possessions can become expressions of gratitude to those who provide divine instructions for salvation leading to everlasting life, serving God, and wholesome Christian living. Paul illustrates a principle for expressing gratitude and receiving spiritual blessings in the following scripture passage. The question Paul asks, “*If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?*” (1 *Corinthian 9:11*)

Many of our teachers out of their love for Christ and the church devote long hours to study and at their own expense for resources and materials to adequately convey the truth of God’s Word to the church body. “The appeal, in Galatians 6:6 for financial support though stated as an imperative, is based not on the law but on love—on the bond of *koinonia*. The sharing between pupil and instructor is an expression of the relationship they have in Christ.”⁵

APPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

During the times when these Scriptural passages were written, the people worshipped in the temple, synagogues, and houses. Paul and the Apostles traveled laboriously from one country to another as missionaries of the gospel. Today our church buildings, financial obligations and church budgets take on a different dimension from one fiscal year to another. Nevertheless, there are several annual occasions, such as the holidays, birthdays, or anniversaries, throughout each year that members can choose to express special appreciation for the pastor and his assistants for instruction in the Word of God and their support all year long. Even a spontaneous ‘just because’ note or financial gift can provide an exclusive opportunity to express appreciation for receiving instructions in righteousness according to the Scriptures.

PARACHURCH MINISTRIES

Parachurch ministries are those ministries that serve beyond the walls of the local church. Such ministries may provide support in evangelism, discipleship, and biblical instructions on behalf of the pastor and members of the church. These organizations may take the form of missions, campus ministries or prison ministries. At Tabernacle those ministries would include Campus Crusade, Hope for Living, Here’s Life Inner City, and our Prison Ministry, Those who labor in these fields full time, should receive financial support to meet their material needs. God expects us to share our material possessions with others especially among fellow Christians.

The author, Jerry Bridges emphasizes that to practice true *koinonia* we are to be sharers not just givers. Being a giver is strictly voluntary. Sharers, however, go beyond voluntary giving because of the love they have for Christ and each other. We, being both givers and sharers, ought to serve with joy and accept our responsibility in our community relationship.⁶

⁴ Ibid, page 120

⁵ Ibid, p. 121

⁶ Ibid, p. 123.

How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10: 15)

Discussion Question #1:

Why would sharing our material possessions with an instructor of the gospel message be pleasing to God?

Discussion Question 2:

How is supporting local ministries similar to sharing possessions in support of missionary ministries throughout the world?

Discussion Question #3:

What are other ways people can express their appreciation for the pastor and other instructors of the gospel?

Points to Ponder:

In this lesson, a significant point was made; we are sharers and not just givers. “The distinction between a *sharer* and a *giver* is very important. The *giver* is under no obligation; he gives from a strictly voluntary point of view. The *sharer* is under an obligation, although it is an obligation of love. It is a responsibility of relationship and partnership.”⁷ For example, we do not choose to meet the needs of our children when we are able. Under the obligation of our relationship and love, and responsibility as parents, we meet their needs. In what way, can you share over the next month or so?

Helpful Scripture Passages:

1 Corinthians 9:14, Galatian 6:6, Romans 12:27

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank you for our pastor, ministers and lay teachers who teach us how to build a solid foundation for a relationship with You by studying the gospel message and Your Word. Lord we pray to be obedient by reciprocating our appreciation with material possessions to edify the body of Christ. We depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us as instructed by Your Word. We thank you for helping us value this blessing as we ultimately seek to grow in relationship with You. In Jesus the Christ’s name we pray! Amen!

⁷ *ibid*, 123

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
February	2014	Spiritual Fellowship
March	2014	Partnership in the Gospel
April	2014	Spiritual Gifts Within the Community
May	2014	Sharing Your Possessions
June	2014	Supporting Your Local Ministry