

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church  
2080 West Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, Michigan 48208  
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

“True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia”<sup>1</sup>

Lesson 6: Partnership in the Gospel

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

**Objective:** To experience *koinonia* through *Partnership in the Gospel* based on biblical principles with others who share a common life in Jesus Christ.

**Scripture:** “*I thank God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*” (*Philippians 1:3-5*)

Previous lessons have dealt with *Koinonia* when translated from the original language as *fellowship* with one another within the body of Christ. This month’s lesson will focus on *Koinonia* when translated, from the Greek, as *partnership*. When we build up and enjoy one another, we are in fellowship, but when we join together to spread the gospel, we are in partnership. In the latter, our objectives are focused outside of ourselves on those who need to be brought into the fellowship of God’s people.<sup>2</sup> Today’s lesson centers on gaining a perspective on how to become actively involved in *partnership in the spread of the gospel* throughout the world by providing ministerial support. The great commission given by Jesus tells us, “*Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost....*” –Matthew 28:20. This biblical mandate is fulfilled through the practice of *partnership in the gospel*. We are all called to spread the gospel, but for practical reasons the majority of us are limited to the geography in our local areas.

Our partnership in the gospel, once clearly understood ought to inspire us to become actively involved in the *spread of the gospel* through fervent prayer and financial contributions without leaving home. Paul’s letter to the Philippians gives us a biblical model to follow and we can come to value this fellowship by engaging as partners in the gospel. “He considered his dear friends in Philippi to be actively engaged in partnership with him in the spreading of the gospel to other cities, even though most of them never left Philippi.”<sup>3</sup> In a similar way, we can become actively engaged with the body of Christ in fulfilling the great commission.

There are two significant ways that enables everyone to share in partnership in the gospel. Paul first acknowledged the Philippians church and remembered to thank God for them in his prayers for their *partnership in the gospel* from the beginning of his ministry up to the end. We can do likewise. The second way believers can practice *partnership in the gospel* is through regular and meaningful prayer for those who are called to go and spread the gospel throughout the world. There are members within our own church body who travel regularly to spread the gospel of

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<sup>1</sup> Bridges, Jerry. True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia. Colorado Springs, CO, Nav Press (2012) Print.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 75 – 76.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 75.

Jesus Christ. We must be willing to put in quality time and go out as fishermen among men even within our own communities. As a result, when we as a community of believers truly apply the principles of *koinonia*, this should compel us to grow in spiritual fellowship with one another.

*For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means of their own accord begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints. (2 Corinthians 8:3-4)*

### **Partnership in Giving**

Paul's acknowledged the financial support from Philippi throughout in his letter to the Philippian Church. "Every Christian today has the same privilege as did the believers at Philippi of being a partner in the gospel enterprise. Each of us has the opportunity to practice partnership with ministries by our prayers and/or financial support far beyond our personal endeavors, both in cities at home and in countries overseas."<sup>4</sup> Claiming our Jerusalem is gospel partnership effort all of us can support; physically, financially, and/ or through prayers.

### **Partnership in Prayer**

The Philippians not only gave, they prayed for Paul. Prayer unifies us with other active participants to fulfill God's work as we seek Him to fulfill His purpose in us and in others. Paul relied on and gratefully acknowledged their prayers and monetary gifts not only to help us learn about the support he received from several churches, but to give us a powerful way to become involved as active partners in spreading the gospel throughout the world with prayers and monetary gifts.

### **Discussion Question #1:**

Do you consider partnership in the gospel – an interactive way to build your level of spirituality – to be vital to your spiritual growth and health? Why and why not?

### **Discussion Question #2:**

Think about this statement: "Fellowship in this sense of partnership in the gospel is not so much an activity to be enjoyed but a responsibility to be fulfilled." Do you agree or disagree? Why?<sup>5</sup>

### **Points to Ponder:**

Paul engaged *partnership in the gospel* among believers at Philippi who supported his ministry without leaving their neighborhoods. Our fellowship and witnessing to others in an honest and sincere way will help us grow and help nonbelievers to grow. What ministries within Tabernacle can you partner with through prayer, financial support, or even join to encourage the spread of the gospel of salvation to others?

### **Helpful Scripture Passages:**

Mark 16:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:25, Matthew 9:38, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 83

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father as the Philippian Church, we desire to have a partnership in the gospel with fellow believers spreading the gospel. We pray as a church that we will continue to work within our own church and with other community churches to reach beyond the walls of Tabernacle to fulfill our responsibility of extending gifts and prayers to those who are believers and those who need to be brought into the fellowship of God's people. Where we cannot physically go let us be of a mind to financially support ministries at home and in other countries as Christ commands us, particularly those of our own household of faith. We know our prayers are powerful so we pray for our church and its endeavors and missionaries in other countries who are separated from family and friends and from the safety of this country.

In Jesus Name we pray! Amen!

### **Monthly Biblical Lessons**

<u>Month</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Monthly Biblical Lessons</u>
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