

**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>**

**Spiritual Fellowship**

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

**Objective:** To experience spiritual fellowship, based on biblical principles, with others who share a common life in Jesus Christ.

**Scripture:** *“You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.” (Hebrews 3:13 NLT)*

This month’s lesson will emphasize the biblical practice of *koinonia* through spiritual fellowship with people who share a common life in Jesus Christ. Spiritual fellowship is a mutual commitment to one another that sustains and strengthens our faith. A prerequisite of this mutual benefit is a close fellowship with Christ and the knowledge of His Word. For the true Christian, this fellowship begins with a personal communion with the Father made possible by the mediation of His Son Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

When we as a community of believers truly apply the principles of Koinonia, this compels us to grow in spiritual fellowship with one another. Spiritual fellowship involves mutual spiritual stimulation which is distinct from regular social activity within the body of Christ.<sup>3</sup> It may come from reading or studying the Bible, memorization of Scriptures, and sharing applications of biblical principles with one another. It helps to hear what God is saying to us through another believer.<sup>4</sup> Spiritual fellowship means that we “watch out” for and help one another in that we become committed and assume responsibility to encourage, admonish, and pray for one another.<sup>5</sup>

As we seek to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ, we must experience spiritual growth with others through the knowledge and the application of the Word of God for vital nourishment, so that our spiritual journey is pleasing to God. Paul commended the believers at Rome because they were full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. They engaged in spiritual fellowship, mutually building up and caring for one another. (Romans 15:14)

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

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 1:3 [ESV]

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 63.

*“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you that you may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (1John1:3)*

### **Sharing Biblical Truth**

Sharing biblical truth starts with the revelation of the scripture. Recording important truths from your daily Bible readings is a great way to grow. Two people may share with one another or this can take place within a small group setting.<sup>6</sup> We must pray that the Holy Spirit will illuminate our minds to the understanding of His written Word, so that we may freely and accurately share what we have learned. Also we must be careful to listen to what other Christians have to say, for God often speaks to us through other believers.

*“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”  
(Proverbs 27:17)*

Spiritual fellowship has multiple components in addition to sharing scriptural truths. Optimum spiritual fellowship includes the following:

**Encouraging One Another** – In the face of seeking to live a Christian life daily during both good and difficult times, in this culture, and amidst different national views, it is essential to encourage and build one another up daily or weekly as time permits.

**Openness with One Another** – This involves sharing our disappointments, failures, sins, discouragements, and weaknesses in addition to our blessings and joys. Paul said that we are to *“speak the truth in love”* so that we may grow up in all things into Jesus Christ the head of the body. (Ephesians 4: 15)

*“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)*

**Accountability** – Christ followers must be mutually accountable where there is the willingness to be checked on and challenged in agreed-on areas of one’s life. This involves mutual trust, confidentiality, openness, and concern. Accountability is very important for those involved in discipleship training.<sup>7</sup>

*“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)*

**Praying Together** – Prayer is vital in the body of Christ. This is where we personally commune with God for ourselves, our families, and on behalf of one another. Sadly, this is an under used resource which has so much potential in growing us, shaping us and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 67.

empowering us spiritually, increasing our faith and knowledge of God Himself, communion with Him, and building us up in the body of Christ.

**Discussion Question #1:**

Do you consider spiritual fellowship– interaction with one another on a close personal and spiritual level – to be vital to your spiritual growth and health? Why and why not?

**Discussion Question #2:**

Hebrews 10:24-25 urges us to “consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” How do you – or how could you – actively pursue this pattern with others?

**Points to Ponder:**

What steps can you take to grow in your relationships with God and with others?

**Helpful Scripture Passages:**

Acts 2:42, Matthew 18:20, James 5:16, Ephesians 4:11-16

**Closing Prayer:** Father, we need you and we need each other. We struggle daily and need to openly and honestly share our struggles knowing we are committed and accountable to each other. As our Church Covenant states, “we further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other’s reputations, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other’s joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another’s burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but, always ready for reconciliation.....” Help us to live true to this commitment. In Jesus Name we pray! Amen!

**Monthly Biblical Lessons**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Monthly Biblical Lessons</b>
<b>January</b>	<b>2015</b>	Communion with God
<b>February</b>	<b>2015</b>	Fellowship and Community