**Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church** **2080 West Grand Blvd.**

**Detroit, Michigan 48208**

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**“True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia”[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Spiritual Fellowship**

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

**Lesson 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; those who are in the body of 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 devoted Christian, this fellowship begins with a personal communion with the Father made possible by the mediation of His Son Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit .2

When we as a community of believers truly apply the principles of Koinonia, this compels us to grow in spiritual fellowship with one another. “God has made us in such a way that our fellowship with Himself is fed by our fellowship with fellow-Christians and requires to be so fed constantly for its own deepening enrichment.” [Jerry Bridges, *True Community*] Spiritual fellowship involves mutual spiritual stimulation which is distinct from regular social activity within the body of Christ.3 Reading and studying the Bible, memorization of Scriptures, and sharing applications of biblical principles can become the basis for spiritual fellowship with one another. When we engage in spiritual fellowship, it helps and strengthens us to hear what God is saying to us through another believer.[[2]](#footnote-2) Spiritual fellowship can mean that we “watch out” for and help one another in that we become committed to assume responsibility to encourage, admonish, and pray for one another.[[3]](#footnote-3)

As we seek to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ, we would want our spiritual journey to be pleasing to God. Within the church body, we can experience and share in vital spiritual nourishment and growth with each other through learning about God and acquiring biblical knowledge and applying the Word of 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)

*“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 ideas with one another or this can take place within a small group setting.[[4]](#footnote-4) First we should be careful to pray that the Holy Spirit will illuminate our minds to understand His written Word, so that we may freely and accurately share what we have learned. Moreover, we should carefully 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 each other 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 should be mutually accountable where there is the willingness to be checked on and challenged in agreed-on areas of one’s life. Spiritual fellowship is advantageous since in the face of temptation, or subtle deceptions by the enemy, or an outright satanic attack, we can admonish, warn, encourage, and pray for each other. This involves mutual trust, confidentiality, openness, and concern. Accountability is very important for those involved in discipleship training, spiritual growth, and integrity in our spiritual lives.[[5]](#footnote-5)

“*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, shaping, and empowering us spiritually. In addition, our faith is increased along with our knowledge of God Himself, and communion with Him. As a result of spiritual fellowship, we can be built up in the body of Christ, continuously.

**Discussion Question #1:**

Do you consider spiritual fellowship (your 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 that 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.

1. Bridges, Jerry. *True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia.* Colorado Springs, CO, NavPress (2012) Print. 2 1 John 1:3 [ESV] 3 Ibid, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid, 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid, 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid, 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)