

GBC *Connection*

Spiritual fellowship is not a topic that we dwell on very often. Many of us assume that time spent around coffee & food is considered fellowship. I'm not saying that fellowship cannot happen during these times, but mere "small talk" is not what God intended fellowship to be. The word fellowship has lost some of its importance among believers. The Christians of the early Church devoted themselves to fellowship (Acts 2:42). They were interested in each other's well being and edification. J. I. Packer says,

"We should not...think of our fellowship with other Christians as a spiritual luxury, an optional addition to the exercises of private devotion. We should recognize rather that such fellowship is a spiritual necessity; for 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 and enrichment." ¹

There is a need for us to be involved in each other's lives on a deeper level. God did not intend for us to go through life by ourselves. Instead he made us part of a body that needs to function together for His good. Our ministry is not only to unbelievers but also to believers. God desires that we build each other up. He wants us to ...

Love One Another (1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:17-18).
Forgive One Another (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:31-32; Mat. 18:21-35).
Confess Your Faults One To Another (Jam. 5:16).
Pray For One Another (Jam. 5:16).
Bear One Another's Burdens (Gal. 6:2).
Admonish One Another (Heb. 3:13; 10:25).
Consider One Another (Heb. 10:24).
Comfort One Another (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11).
Edify One Another (Rom. 14:19).

¹ <http://www.new-testament-christian.com/fellowship.html>

Teach One Another (Col. 3:16).
Serve One Another (Gal. 5:13; John 13:1-17).
Accept one another (Rom. 15:7).²

Making the Connection

I think we are all guilty of not practicing fellowship and taking a personal interest in others lives in our own Church assembly. I don't often ask the "deeper" questions to get at the root of someone's spiritual well-being so that I can encourage, pray for, and comfort. As Believers we should desire to not only help someone out in time of grief or loss, but in times of struggle and heartache. We often don't share our personal lives enough with each other. Satan wants the lines of communication to stay close between believers so that he can make us weaker.

If we all want to work together as a body effectively then we need to get to know the other parts as well as we know ourselves. Packer says that our fellowship with Him is fed by our fellowship with other fellow-Christians. The closer we are as a body and the more enriching our time is together and the more enriched our Spiritual walk with God will be. This is a very interesting perspective, and it holds a lot of truth. If we are focused on others and loving them, admonishing, edifying, and building up, then our thoughts and actions are focused on Godly things, which ultimately is what God wants!

Taking Action

Take some time to reflect on fellowship. Read over and look up the references from the list of things that God desires for us to do as part of fellowship.

Think of someone from our Church family that you may not have a close relationship already with, and then consider how you might put into practice a few of these qualities to fellowship with that person.

Allow yourself to be stretched out of your comfort zone. And Pray!

Suggested Reading: see list on left **Memorization:** James 5:16

*The purpose of GBC (Graphite Bible Chapel) Connection is for reflection and further personal study to make a deeper connection between the Sunday teaching and our daily lives.
Also available online at www.graphitebiblechapel.com*

² <http://www.new-testament-christian.com/fellowship.html>