

BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

(Phil 2:1-4)

INTRO - The a.m. lesson dealt with fellowship with Christ and the result: fellowship with others who are likewise in fellowship with Christ. This lesson will explore some of the benefits of fellowship among believers.

1. Laying A Foundation - Ph 2:1-3

A. A review of spiritual benefits - 2:1. 1st class conditions, affirmation of what is true (comp. 4:8).

1. Consolation/comfort - Two closely related words which indicate the assistance and tender encouragement we receive from the Lord and His love.
2. Fellowship of the Spirit - Partaking of the benefits offered by the H.S. through the Word.
3. Affection/mercy, or tender mercies - We are recipients of God's gentle dealing and forgiveness.

B. **"If ... then ..."** fulfill my joy by: (v 2)

1. Spiritual unity. Paul had just mentioned this (1:27) and will exhort by name two sisters (4:2) to exhibit such unity "in the Lord."
2. The Lord enjoins upon us unity of thought and purpose in things pertaining to our relationship with Christ.
 - a. This does not mean agreement on opinions or preferences in worldly affairs in which we have been given latitude (investments, insurance, tastes in furniture, decorations, cars, arts and crafts, sports, etc.).
 - b. We must not let such non-essentials become divisive by holding others to our standards of judgment.
3. Christians are one in love and thought and purpose as they have dedicated themselves to adopting Christ's character, learning and practicing the truth, fighting against worldly influences, saving the lost, and going to heaven.

C. The need for humility - v 3.

1. Selfish ambition/conceit will undermine any group or team efforts.
2. Esteeming others better goes against the modern ideas of self-affirmation and

esteem.

3. But Paul himself felt this in spite of his greatness - “least of the apostles” (I Cor 15:9); “less than the least of the saints” (Eph 3:8).

a. This does not mean to **deny** what is **true**. I may have certain abilities that surpass others, but others have some that surpass me.

b. We should not dwell on ourselves and what we think we deserve from others but look to give praise, encouragement, support where needed.

2. Looking Out For Others’ Interests - Ph 2:4

A. This necessitates a knowledge of others’ circumstances and a willingness to be actively involved in their affairs **where appropriate**.

B. Christians might need to:

1. Warn others about their sins, “pulling them out of the fire” (Jude 23).

2. Bearing burdens (so fulfilling the law of Christ) - Gal 6:2:

a. Loneliness, grief, anxieties - Using our experience to assure, comfort others.

b. Helping them accomplish what they might not be able to do for themselves.

3. Aid spiritual restoration - Gal 6:1.

C. Our society encourages isolation, privacy, tending to one’s own affairs. Some among us might suffer in silence rather than solicit help from others. We should be open toward each other and desirous of sharing burdens and supplying needs.

3. Overview

A. We **are** our brother’s keeper. Jesus died to save our brother/sister. How much more should we be willing and anxious to lend our assistance.

B. Christians share the most important aspects of life together:

1. Birth/death.

4. Teaching our children.

2. Marriage.

5. Conversions to Christ.

3. Worship.

C. Let us **treasure** and **protect** these great blessings of fellowship in Christ.