

Life-Style Evangelism: Fellowship That Functions

by Gregory Fobbs

There are many books in the world, and most are written simply for pleasure. There are history books, books of science, mathematics, etc. Many are written to give functional basic knowledge for living in our world. Most, if not all, prepare man for a specific function only. However, the Bible prepares us to live now, and it prepares us to live when life as we know it ends. But like a mathematics book, if the things written are not practiced, the knowledge of that book becomes obsolete and of no value to the reader.

Last week we talked about learning that lives. This week we will talk about a fellowship that functions. In Acts 2:42, Paul talked about the early church and how it continued steadfastly in the apostles' fellowship.

"Fellowship"

- a. communion
- b. sharing in common
- c. a contribution

What were the apostles doing?

- a. teaching
- b. breaking bread
- c. praying

So, the early church were participators in all that the apostles were engaged in. The lost were being taught by the apostles; the Christians were sharing or contributing. This helped the apostles' teaching to be more effective. They sold their possessions. The y shared with the needy. They continued daily in one accord; fellowshipping and contributing. The fellowship was not a social function. It was a sharing of things in common, contributing to the winning and strengthening of souls. Even though the fellowship was a glad happening, the focus was on the lost: not on self. It was a fellowship that functioned and people were saved.

"Fellowship" - The word "koinonia" involves people to people relationships, but it is also linked to God. Each individual of the Lord's body who is blessed to have proper relationships with other members does so because he/she has a proper relationship with God. The fellowship mentioned in Acts 2 flowed horizontally and vertically. This kind of fellowship involves the church's abiding in the vine for fruitfulness: John 15:4-5 says, "Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself. I am the vine, you are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing." This allows the body to be "joined and knitted together" in order to build itself up in love.

It is the fellowship of the spirit which gives the dynamic, living, healing quality to the fellowship of the believers. In 2 Corinthians, Paul's prayer was that the fellowship (communion) of the Holy Spirit would be with the believers (2 Cor. 13:14). The idea of Paul's prayer was that their fellowship, or participation, came from the Holy Spirit. In Philippians 2:1-2, Paul said, "If there be any fellowship of the Spirit..." The object of Paul's request, using the present tense, implies a continual habitual attitude of harmony, united in Spirit. Genuine fellowship cannot be duplicated outside the church. God's proposed fellowship is an atmosphere, an environment, a context, and a set of attitudes and actions which grow and develop as Spirit-controlled Christians share their lives together, and share their gifts for the edifying of the body. In other words, "koinonia" occurs when Christians are together under the direction of the Holy Spirit. All fellowships have a common ground to direct and to energize participants, however, only the Holy Spirit brings about fellowship that is complete in every respect and has God's power to guarantee success. The success will be in an atmosphere that allows the Holy Spirit to empower the church to use its gifts to touch and change lives: life-style evangelism.

The word Christian points to a fellowshipping person. When a member hurts, fellowship is a source of strength, encouragement, rebuke, and motivation. It is our key to growth. The healthy Christian grows because he/she has vital contact with the gifts provided by the entire body. The reason: one person's gift may not be what is needed, but somewhere in the overall fellowship God provides the gift that is needed. Every member is used and every member should be free to function properly. When the whole body functions under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is experiencing "fellowship" and the unbeliever sees beauty.

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Minister Gregory Fobbs

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- Morning Worship - 10:45
- Men's Training Leadership
- Women's Bible Class - 5:00 pm
- Evening Worship - 6:00 pm
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