



Acts 2:42

(42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

New King James Version

Two key ideas are important if we are to grasp the biblical teaching on "[fellowship](#)." The first is that, in the New Testament, what we have in common is shared, to begin with, because of a common *relationship* that we all have together in Christ. We can have fellowship and share with each other because we have a relationship with Christ; we share Him in common.

Paul writes in [1 Corinthians 1:9](#), "[God](#) is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, [Jesus Christ](#) our Lord." *The Revised English Bible* translates [1 John 1:3](#) as, "It is this which we have seen and heard that we declare to you also, in order that you may share with us in a common life, that life which we share with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ."

Fellowship is first the sharing of a common life with each other through a [relationship with God](#) through Jesus Christ. We were all individuals with little in common until the Father's calling separated us from everyone else in [this world](#), and we became part of Christ's body through His Spirit ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#), 27). In this, we can see that true Christian fellowship is primarily a relationship rather than an activity.

In [Acts 2:42](#), the young church was not merely devoting itself to common activities but to a vital, spiritual relationship. It was this relationship that produced an active sharing in other ways. Many of us have gotten this backwards—that the activities produce the relationship. Not so! The relationship comes first, then the common activities follow.

It is so important that we grasp this. Fellowship means that we belong to each other in a relationship because we share with one another the common life and [grace](#) of Jesus Christ. From this flows additional sharing of our time, experiences, [wisdom](#), and many

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other things.

The second key idea derives from the fact that both New Testament Greek words for "fellowship," *koinônia* and *metochos*, mean "to share together" in the sense of a *partnership*. As sharers together with Christ, we are automatically copartners with Him and with our brethren in His enterprise here on earth. His work is our work.

A business partnership is always formed in order to attain a known objective, such as providing a service to the public at a profit for the partners. In the same way, the concept of a spiritual partnership implies that it is created with godly objectives, the most important one being glorifying God. Just as we are united in a relationship, so we are all united in a partnership formed to glorify God by completing His work.

Paul writes about Christian unity in [Romans 15:5-6](#), explaining that its aim is to glorify God: "Now may the God of [patience](#) and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Peter also states that our service for God is ultimately to bring Him glory: "If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" ([1 Peter 4:11](#)).

Thus, fellowship also means that we have been brought into partnership with our Savior and with each other to fulfill [God's will](#) and glorify Him.

To summarize what true Christian fellowship is, *relationship* describes what we are, a community of people bound together by our common life that we share through our union with Christ. *Partnership* describes how we interact within that relationship—we are partners in a calling and an enterprise in which we are to work harmoniously with a shared purpose to achieve mutual objectives to glorify God and to do the work of Jesus Christ.

While many today consider it to be of little importance, fellowship in the body of Christ is certainly no side issue. In [Acts 2:42](#), as one of the four activities to which the early church devoted itself, it was listed alongside Bible study and [prayer](#). God has called us and put us together as His Family to accomplish His purpose in us and ultimately in all of mankind. We should not forget that when we fellowship, we are sharing and working together toward a common goal, the Kingdom of God.

— Clyde Finklea

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