

TREK 101

Christian

Discipleship

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

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LESSON 10 FELLOWSHIP

**“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.” Philippians 2:12b
(NLT)**

A Ministry of Rockpointe Church

Lesson 10

CONNECTION WITH BELIEVERS

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(This Lesson Adapted from Donald Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*)

"To measure progress in Christlikeness only in terms of growth in fellowship with God is an incomplete measurement. Spiritual maturity also includes growth in fellowship with the children of God". Donald Whitney

1. Validate your agreement or disagreement with this statement.
2. What tensions does this produce in Christians as we live in our present look-out-for number-one Western society?

A. CONNECTION WITH BELIEVERS DEFINED

1. The most common word used to define this connection is fellowship.
2. Our English word fellowship is the translation of the Greek word "koinonia". Some basic ideas based on this word include:
 - i. One meaning is to "hold something in common".
 1. **Read aloud Ephesians 4:4-6** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
Ephesians 4:4–6 (ESV)
 2. What do believers share in common?
 - ii. It was used to describe such entities as labor guilds, partners in a law firm, and the marriage relationship. We conclude that fellowship denotes an interdependent relationship.
 1. What implications come to your mind?
 - iii. It is an action word suggesting fellowship is not just being together, it is doing together. It is not just doing anything together. It is only doing God's will together.
 - iv. What are some immediate responses to this idea?
3. **Definition:** Christian fellowship is a relationship of inner unity among believers that expresses itself in outer co-participation with Christ and one another in accomplishing God's will on earth.
4. Difference between socializing and fellowship
 - i. Socializing defined
 1. Sharing of human and earthly life

2. It is perhaps what we call fellowship dinners in the “fellowship hall”
- ii. Fellowship defined
 1. Involves sharing our spiritual lives
 2. Socializing can be part of and the context of fellowship but we can socialize without having biblical fellowship

5. Application

- i. How does the failure to talk to other believers about mutual interests, problems and objectives of discipleship weaken our spiritual lives?
- ii. List some benefits gained by talking with other believers about our spiritual lives?
- iii. With so much in common with other believers why are we reluctant to talk about spiritual things vs the weather, kids, jobs and sports?

B. FELLOWSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. **Read Aloud Genesis 2:18** Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Genesis 2:18 (ESV)
 - i. Consider the context: Adam is in the Garden of Eden surrounded by beauty, plenty, and responsibility but this was not enough. What does this say about our need for one another?
 - ii. **Principle:** God has created us to be dependent people—dependent on Him and on one another.
 1. None of us has the ability to go it alone. We need the communion or companionship of one another.
 2. “...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.”” J. I. Packer
2. **Read aloud** Gen 17:14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” (ESV)
 - i. The concept of fellowship is inherent in the covenant God made with Israel. Within this covenant God promised His presence, protection, blessings and favor. When an individual did not live up to this covenant, they were “cut off” and was in danger of losing the benefits of this covenant thus making fellowship, part of the community, a priority.
 - ii. An Israelite should be “cut off” from the people of God for various offenses, such as failure to circumcise a male child (Gen 17:12, 14), eating leavened bread during Passover (Exo 12:15), making an unholy animal sacrifice (Lev 17:1–4), eating blood (v 10), sinning deliberately (Num 15:30–31), or failing to undergo ceremonial cleansing after contact with a dead body (19:11–20).
3. Implications of being “cut off” or broken fellowship
 - i. To live outside the camp was to be cut off from the blessings of the

covenant. It was the place farthest removed from God and His people. It was little wonder that when a man was diagnosed as unclean he had to go into mourning. He experienced a living death; his life as a member of God's people experiencing God's blessing came to an end. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*

- ii. While the meaning of "cut off" is debated it includes the following:
 - 1. In the case of a Sabbath-breaker, being "cut off" meant death. Num. 15:32–36
 - 2. Excommunication -- cutting off from the worshipping community
 - 3. Form of divine curse when offense unknown to the public but would expose themselves to God's direct punitive action. See Leviticus 20.
- 4. Fellowship concept illustrated in the Poetic Books
 - i. **Read Aloud** Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (ESV) Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!
 - ii. **Read Aloud** Proverbs 27:17 (ESV) Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.
 - iii. What do these passages suggest about the value of fellowship?
- 5. **APPLICATION.**
 - i. Considering the above discussion, how would an Israelite of old respond to oft heard comments of today: "I can worship just as good on the golf course ("outside the camp") as I can at church"?
 - ii. Summarize the positives of fellowship and negatives of being out of fellowship for the Israelite.

C. FELLOWSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT – COMPONENTS OF

As with many concepts and doctrines, the New Testament develops more fully the concept of fellowship. Four components of fellowship emerge particularly in Luke's and Paul's writings by the use of the word *koinonia*.

1. FELLOWSHIP IS RELATIONSHIP

- i. **Read aloud** 1John 1:3 (ESV) that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
- ii. Believers can have fellowship and share together because they first of all have a relationship with Christ and share Him in common.
- iii. Fellowship is a relationship, not an activity. It is sharing a common life with other believers, a life that we together share with God the Father and God the Son.
- iv. Fellowship means belonging to one another in the Body of Christ, along with all the privileges and responsibilities that such a relationship entails.
 - 1. **Read Aloud** 1 Peter 4:10 (ESV) As each has received a gift, use it

- to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12 and see how Paul compares the Body of Christ to our physical bodies and the need for each part to function properly.
- v. Our relationship with each is based on the idea all whom God values as his children we must value as brothers and sisters. Therefore all believers are equal. Galatians 3:28
- vi. **Application.**
1. List and discuss privileges and responsibilities of relationship with other believers.

2. **FELLOWSHIP IS PARTNERSHIP**

- i. Believers are partners
1. **Read Aloud** Philippians 1: 3-5 (ESV) I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.
 2. **Read Aloud** 2 Corinthians 8:23 (ESV) As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.
 - a. In both of these passages, the word partnership is the word fellowship or koinona.
 - b. Paul viewed Titus and the Philippians as partners in the ministry of the gospel, as co-workers who shared in ministry.
- ii. Believers are partners in promoting the Gospel
1. **Read Aloud** Philippians 1:27(ESV) Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,
 2. We are all united together in a partnership formed to glorify God through the sharing and promotion of the Gospel.
- iii. Believers are partners in promoting each other's growth
1. **Read Aloud** Ephesians 4:13,16 (NLT) This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.
 2. As believers, we are to mutually edify one another.
- iv. **APPLICATION**
1. What are ways we can promote our partnership of the Gospel?

2. What are ways we mutually edify one another?

3. FELLOWSHIP IS SHARING SPIRITUAL THINGS

- i. **Read Aloud** Philemon 6–7 (ESV) and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.
 - 1. The word “sharing” is the word fellowship/koinona.
- ii. Sharing with one another on a close personal and spiritual level.
 - 1. Sharing together in the burdens, concerns, joys, and blessings for the purpose of encouragement, comfort, challenge or exhortation, praise, prayer and physical help according to the needs and ability
 - 2. See Appendix A for verses that describe our actions toward “one another”
- iii. Sharing together in worship especially in Lord’s Supper
 - 1. We share spiritual things as we sing of hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs and prayer, (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), and the teaching of the of the Word (Acts 2:42)
- iv. **Application**
 - 1. Review Appendix A. What are some growth areas this identifies in your sharing spiritual things with others?

4. FELLOWSHIP IS SHARING PHYSICAL THINGS

- i. **Read Aloud** Romans 15:26 (ESV) For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.
 - 1. The word “contribution” is the word fellowship or koinona.
- ii. Believers need to be willing to share their material possessions for the promotion of the gospel and to help those in need. See Acts 2:44-45; 4:32.
- iii. The Bible strongly admonishes to meet the needs of others especially those of believers. Read Rom 12:13; Gal 6:10
- iv. **Application.**
 - 1. Read 2 Corinthians 8:3-4 and Hebrews 13:16. How do these verses challenge your ideas about sharing physical things?

D. WAY TO PRACTICE BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP

True Biblical fellowship in connecting with other believers is critical in helping to sustain your faith by providing ministry, encouragement, and an atmosphere of spiritual “cleansing” and growth. Let’s review some ways we can do that.

- 1. Be a member of a local church. Join RockPointe.
 - i. Have you accepted Christ as your Savior?
 - ii. Have you publically confessed and declared that through baptism?
 - iii. Have you attended Starting Pointe and become a covenant member of

RockPointe?

2. Connect with a small group.
 - i. If you are not a member of a small group, go to <https://rpcdfwtx.infellowship.com/>
 - ii. Login or create an account and search for a group that matches you
3. Be a mentor or be mentored.
4. Be diligent in practicing the “one anothers” seen in Appendix A.
5. Discover and exercise your spiritual gift (s). Romans 12:4-8
6. Spiritually restore a professing believer whose public lifestyle is directly opposed to Scriptural teachings (Gal 6:1)
 - i. Paul identifies at least 3 situations where this is needed
 1. gross immorality that is publicly known (1 Cor. 5:1–13),
 2. doctrinal heresy (Rom. 16:17–18)
 3. intentionally creating division in the church (Titus 3:10–11)
 - ii. Paul reminds in 1 Cor 5:5 the withdrawal of fellowship removes the spiritual protection from them much like we saw in the Old Testament when a person was “cut off” from the community
 - iii. Guidelines for restorative action are found in Matthew 18:15-20
7. Lighten fellow believers’ loads by bearing one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2).
 - i. Discuss some practical ways this can be done.
8. Share material blessings with brothers and sisters in need (2 Cor 9:13).
9. Comfort a fellow believer in times of suffering (1 Cor 12:26).
10. Pray for one another in the Spirit without ceasing (Eph 6:18)
11. Others _____

E. AXIOMS FOR CONNECTING WITH BELIEVERS

1. God has created us to be dependent people—dependent on Him and on one another.
2. Christlikeness is measured on both the vertical plane (our communion and fellowship with the Lord through the Word, prayer, the filling of the Holy Spirit, and the abiding life) and the horizontal plane(our communion and fellowship with the body of Christ, other believers).
3. Fellowship involves sharing our spiritual lives while socializing is sharing our human and earthly life. Unless we are very careful we do a lot of socializing in the name of fellowship.

**HOW HAS YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT FELLOWSHIP CHANGED?
WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC STEPS/ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE RIGHT NOW
TO BETTER CONNECT WITH BELIEVERS?**

APPENDIX A

" One another"

- Rom 12:10 **Love** one another with brotherly affection. **Outdo** one another in showing honor.
- Rom 12:16 **Live in harmony** with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.
- Rom 14:13 Therefore let us **not pass judgment** on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.
- Rom 15:5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to **live in** such **harmony** with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,
- Rom 15:7 Therefore **welcome** one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
- Rom 15:14 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to **instruct** one another.
- Rom 16:16 **Greet** one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.
- 1 Cor 7:5 **Do not deprive** one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
- 1 Cor 11:33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, **wait** for one another—
- 1 Cor 12:25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same **care for** one another.
- 2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, **comfort** one another, **agree** with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
- Gal 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love **serve** one another.
- Gal 5:26 Let us **not** become conceited, **provoking** one another, **envying** one another.
- Gal 6:2 **Bear** one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- Eph 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, **bearing with** one another in love,
- Eph 4:32 **Be kind** to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving** one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- Eph 5:19 **addressing** one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,
- Eph 5:21 **submitting** to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- Col 3:9 **Do not lie** to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

- Col 3:13 **bearing with** one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
- Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, **teaching and admonishing** one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
- 1 Thess 3:12 and may the Lord make you increase and **abound in love for** one another and for all, as we do for you,
- 1 Thess 4:9 Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to **love** one another,
- 1 Thess 4:18 Therefore **encourage** one another with these words.
- 1 Thess 5:11 Therefore **encourage** one another and **build** one another up, just as you are doing.
- 1 Thess 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to **do good** to one another and to everyone.
- 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have **fellowship with** one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
- 1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should **love** one another.
- 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and **love** one another, just as he has commanded us.
- 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us **love** one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.
- 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to **love** one another.
- 1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we **love** one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.
- 2 John 5 And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we **love** one another.