

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

July 5

2009

## What is the Meaning of Fellowship?

Since so much is being said and written on the subject of "fellowship," it seems good to examine the use of this word in the scriptures so we may see what its true significance is and what scriptural fellowship embraces, as well as how it is manifested.

"Koinon" in the New Testament can properly be defined as "sharing something with someone." It denotes a partnership in work or legally, such as Peter shared with James and John in the fishing business (Luke 5:10).

It is used to express a common relationship or nature. Jesus, in order to destroy the power of Satan over mankind, shared with man "flesh and blood" that He might deliver man through His death and destroy the power of Satan over him (Hebrews 2:14).

We become partakers" (sharers) of the divine nature through the precious promises of God and the provisions of His grace (2 Peter 1:4)

The Gentiles became "partakers" of the "root and fatness" (the full nature) of the olive tree when they were "grafted" in as branches and shared such fullness with the Jews (Romans 11:17).

We are enabled to enjoy "fellowship" with the Apostles and with God and Christ through the Gospel revealed (1 John 1:3).

Through this Gospel we have been called by God into the fellowship of His Son (1 Corinthians 1:9). This participation with Christ is as a member of His body, which is the church, into which we are baptized under the direction of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). As members of His body we participate with Him and the

benefits of His blood, subject to His authority and in the doing of His will (1 Corinthians 12:11-14). He is the head of that body, over all things to it, and gives to its member's life and strength (Ephesians 4:15-16). In that relationship Christians enjoy the bounty of His grace (Ephesians 1:23).

This participation in Christ and fellowship with Him is made a reality when through faith our lives are identified with His and we become fellow-laborers with Him. Personal participation with Christ is made possible in Christian worship at the Lord's Table in His Kingdom in the observance of the Lord's Supper. Paul makes a very explicit and impressive argument on this in the tenth chapter of First Corinthians.

The argument runs like this:

(1) In Jewish worship the altar where God's name was recorded represented and meant the presence of God to the Jews. Those who ate of the Jewish sacrifices became "partakers" of the altar, which meant to them "participation with God" because the altar was His, His name was recorded upon it, and it represented His presence (1 Corinthians 10:18).

(2) Paul points out that in like manner in the assembly of the saints, even two or three in His name (Matthew 18:20), when the bread and wine are taken in commemoration of His death there is "communion" (fellowship) with the Christ, with His body and His blood, and therefore participation or sharing with Christ, personally (1 Corinthians 10:16).

(3) In such observance of the Lord's Supper there is common union with Christ upon the part of Christians and therefore (fellowship) common union upon the part of Christians with each other in this worship. Partaking of the one loaf, in commemoration of the one body Christ gave as a sacrifice, affords and expresses union and fellowship with Christ and unites those who thus participate with Christ in fellowship one with another in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:17).

(4) He follows with the conclusion that since this is true (union with Christ and with one another in the Lord's Supper) so also participation in false worship unauthorized by Christ, but in harmony with the will of the Devil, meant union with Satan and those who

serve him (1 Corinthians 10:20)

(5) The argument concludes with the fact that those who participate in this false worship serve Satan rather than God and as a result cannot be identified with or participate with Christ (1 Corinthians 10:21).

This very plain teaching unmistakably condemns those who think they can fellowship religious error, participate in it and encourage it, or bid God's speed to those who take part in it's practice and promotion and yet have "fellowship" with Christ

✍ Roy E. Cogdill



## The Difficult Part

Many, before entering the Lord's service, no doubt feel that once they have been baptized, become accustomed to attending worship periods regularly, and overcome some of their old habits, they will pretty well "have it made" in serving the Lord. Doing these outward services, however, is the easy side of obeying Christ. The difficult side involves that which is within; it involves keeping the heart right.

It is easy to attend the worship periods, but it is difficult to worship, to rid the mind completely of worldly things, and to concentrate fully on the Lord. It is easy to sing, but it is difficult to meditate on the words, making the sentiment of the song one's own sentiment. It is easy to bow the head, but it is difficult to pray. It is easy to eat bread and drink fruit of the vine, but it is difficult to concentrate fully as one should on the suffering of Christ. Sitting through a worship period is not in itself worship, for true worship must proceed from the heart (Ephesians 5:19; John 4:24).

In moral realms, the difficult thing to do is to keep the heart pure. It is relatively easy to refrain from killing, stealing, or committing adultery. After all, one is hindered in such matters by the laws of the land, social pressures, forbidding circumstances, fear of being caught, etc. It is difficult, however, to completely rid the mind of jealousy, selfishness, discontent, lust, hatred, bitterness, a spirit of revenge, etc. Anyone who has ever been jealous of another knows the difficulty involved in cleansing the heart of this terrible sin. So it is with all the sins of the heart.

It is easy to develop a friendly way and gracious manner with others, but it is difficult to develop genuine love and concern for others within the heart. It is easy to give something to some charity drive, but it is difficult to develop real compassion for the poor. It is easy to say, "Forgive me, Lord," but it is difficult to repent.

The wise man said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). This is an essential part of serving the Lord...and the difficult part!

✍ Bill Hall



## Trends . . .

A poll of American teenagers by the Josephson Institute found that 30% reported stealing from a store within the last year, 83% said they lied to their parents, 64% admitted to cheating on tests . . . however, 93% indicated that they were satisfied with their own character and ethics, and 77% claimed that "when it comes to doing what is right, I am better than most people I know."

- via AFP News, 12/1/08

**1 Timothy 4:12** "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

(From bulletin of Colleevue church in Columbia, TN)

### **Belleville church of Christ**

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### **Schedule of Services**

Sun. Bible Study. . . . . 9:30 a.m.  
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.  
Sun. Evening Worship. . . . . 5:00 p.m.  
Wed. Bible Study. . . . . 7:00 p.m.

#### **Elders**

Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873  
James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507

#### **Deacons**

Leon Nevins. . . . . (317) 272-2966  
Don Perry. . . . . (765) 676-5825  
Alvin Stanley. . . . . (317) 831-3514

#### **Evangelist**

James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507