

What Is Fellowship?

by Bill Crews

It seems that a great number of brethren is determined to use the word “*fellowship*” in a way foreign to the New Testament (while seldom using it in the New Testament sense) and, in the guise of such a misnomer, to bring into the mission of the church such unauthorized things as entertainment, recreation and other social activities. This is very strange practice for any who profess to speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent, and to call Bible things by Bible names, and to do Bible things in Bible ways.

The kind of fellowship that takes place **AFTER** singing, praying, observing the Lord’s supper, giving of our bounty, and teaching and learning the word of God, is not the fellowship discussed in the New Testament! The word “*fellowship*” in the New Testament does not refer to a joint participation of Christians, as a congregation, in coffee and donuts, cokes and cookies, luncheons and dinners, recreation and entertainment; and there is not a passage in the New Testament that authorizes such activities as a work of the local church. The more of this counterfeit fellowship that churches engage in, the less of the genuine article do they practice.

Christians are to continue steadfastly in fellowship (**Acts 2:42**); their fellowship is with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 1:9**; **2 Corinthians 13:14**; **Philippians 2:1**; **1 John 1:3, 6**); this fellowship comes through the word of God and through walking in the light (**1 John 1:3, 6-7**); Christians are enjoying and exercising this fellowship when they do God’s will in worshiping and working together in things spiritual.

“Fellowship” — Greek *koinonia*

Translated “*fellowship*,” “*communion*,” “*sharing*,” “*share*,” and “*contribution*” in the New Testament. Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon defines the term to mean “the share which one has in anything, participation.” The context tells you the **thing** in which the person shares. See 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:16; 2 Corinthians 8:4; Ephesians 3:9; Philippians 2:1; 3:10; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philemon 1:6.

It can also refer to the **intimate fellowship** one has, as in Acts 2:42; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 2:9; Philippians 1:5; 1 John 1:3, 6-7.

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