

Slide 2 We are here this morning to continue in our series of Habits of Grace

Slide 3 It is my job to talk this morning about Fellowship as a means of grace.

VACATION STORY

Slide 4

Hebrews 10:24–25: Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Fellowship is a gift. Slide 5

Theme: Habits of Grace, Fellowship--Understanding that God has given us a wonderful gift in fellowship and learning to use that gift as a means of grace.

1. Intro- Story about ??? We have all heard inspirational stories about teams that against all odds won the big game. I thought of telling one of those to inspire you this morning, but I am not going to do that today. Instead I thought it better to remind you of the passion the 1st Christians had for one another.

A. The early Christians understood that their faith gave them a distinctive identity which they shared with all other Christians. They saw their relationship as Christians as a relationship among members of a family; they were "born of the Spirit" (John 3:8) — the same spiritual blood flowed in them.

Everything was affected by the early Christians' unity in Christ. Oneness with brothers and sisters in the Lord was more important than relationships with fellow countrymen, with members of the same social class, even with members of the same family.

Here we are some 2000 years later are we still doing this?

B. While the early Christians made a total commitment to each other, our commitments are increasingly fragmented and limited. When another Christian gets into trouble or incurs a need, we expect him to seek help from friends, family or from a social welfare agency.

Recently, as most of you know I had a fairly serious back surgery and with the nature of the work I do I asked myself a simple question. "What will I do if I can not get back to work and have financial difficulty? If I had a medical bill of several thousand dollars that I absolutely had to pay, and I had no money in the bank, whom would I have turned to?" I could never have asked other members of the church for the money; probably they would have told me of a bank where I might get a loan, or of a welfare office where I could get public assistance. I have a great group of men that I rely on for sound advice and prayer, but I would never have asked for money from them we simply did not have that kind of commitment to each other. The people I would have gone to with my need was my family I am fortunate to have a great family on both sides. I know that with our relationships I

can go to them with a serious need. There are also some close friends I could go to but these are close friends who simply happen to be Christians.

Our love for other Christians should not be limited to those whom we like and can get to know personally. Brotherhood in Jesus Christ, not friendship or personal intimacy, was the basis of the brotherly love spoken of in the New Testament. The early Christian communities — and such are the communities the church needs today — encompassed all Christians in a particular area. Brotherly care means a total commitment to those who share our rebirth in Jesus Christ, even to people whom we may not know at all.

2. Fellowship as means of grace:

- A.--Define fellowship:--- a friendly relationship among people
: the relationship of people who share interests or feelings
: a group of people who have similar interests

Greek- Koinonia is used nineteen times in the New Testament and in addition to being translated as “fellowship” it is also translated by the words, “contribution,” “sharing,” and “participation.” A close study of the usage of this word shows that action is always included in its meaning. Fellowship, you see, is not just being together, it is doing together! This is a point almost universally ignored by Christian groups today.

B. ---We need to be sure to get past superficial relationship.

Wordly Fellowship:

What is fellowship in this world? Without a plan.

Engaging in the patterns or practices of those around us. Hanging out, watching the game, going shopping, going to the gym, vacationing with friends This fellowship isn't wrong it just different from true Christian fellowship. There is nothing bad about any of these things, but we can not call them fellowship in Christ.

Slide 6

Christian Fellowship:

Fellowship isn't a certain way of doing things it is a relationship with the people in this church and all other believers. It's a deep, trusting, caring, and loving relationship that flows out of our love for Christ. We need to care for the people in this church and all believers, our place of fellowship.

3. Enjoying Jesus Through Fellowship Slide 7

Hebrews 10:24–25: **Let us consider** how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

A. Make a plan **Slide 8**

In order to go somewhere we need a map, I would bet that everyone here has an app on their phone for directions. If I said men let's drive to Texas tonight we can all go to Google Maps and figure out how to get there. We have such awesome tech that you can name any obscure place in the lower 48 and we can have a plan in probably 5 minutes to get there.

But if I asked for your plan for fellowship within this body I will probably get a blank stare. The same stare I would have given before preparing this. You need a plan, think how you can spend time really getting to know the people in this church around Christ. We are all in the same community you can't choose it. You are in this body, this community God placed you here for this moment.

1. Quote from David Matthias **A plan for fellowship Slide 9**
“**God has given us each other in the church, not just for company, not just to chase away loneliness and lethargy, but to be to each other an indispensable means of his divine favor. We are for each other an essential element of the good work God has begun in us and promises to bring to completion (Phil. 1:6).**”
Habits of Grace

2.-We must be prepared to fellowship with one another, we will need to go out of our way to make this happen.

B. How to stir up to love and good works ----get someone excited about.....
Enthusiastic.....eager ... an intense feeling of deep affection.....something produced or accomplished by effort, exertion, or exercise of skill

Slide 10

Hebrews 10:24–25: Let us consider **how to stir up one another to love and good works**, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Slide 11

1. Encourage one another in Christ --**Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.**" (Heb. 3:13)

Encouragement is an essential way of extending grace to each other.

2. Why we need encouragement...We live in a broken world where everything calls us toward selfishness and despair. Sin steals joy, our bodies break down, our plans falter, our dreams die, our resolves weaken, our perspective dims.

When encouragement is absent from the life of a church people will feel unloved, unimportant, useless, and forgotten. God knows his people are in need of grace-filled reminders, so he calls us to encourage each other every day until his Son returns.

Slide 12

C--.Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some.....

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Slide 13

“We were made for more than private devotions. As nice as it can be to tuck ourselves away in some nook and cranny, all by our lonesome, and read the Scriptures we want to read, pray the prayers we prefer, play the songs we like, memorize the verses we pick, and fast from food when it’s convenient—as important as it is to pursue a regular rhythm of “private worship” in these personal disciplines—this is not the pinnacle of our Christian lives” Page 156

We have spoken about reading the word and prayer these things are important they charge our batteries so that when we get together with God’s people we are ready.

This is as close as we get to heaven while still on this earth when we are gathered as the church to worship Jesus together. When we gather in worship we read the word, pray, and fellowship, it is most important that we come together and worship.

Our church meeting is the place where we will receive most of our fellowship. This is not to say you can’t / won’t do it at other times, but this meeting/ worship service is where you are in the fellowship of your brothers and sisters in Christ. This meeting is the place where we either sit on the sidelines and watch or we choose to get in the game.

You are here to not neglect the fellowship don’t just listen and leave. Be part of what is going on.

It’s ok to fail there are going to be sometimes when you mess it up that’s great because you tried. Our current culture loves to spectate, we love to sit back and let other people do for us.

6. Applying the word: Practical Application

Jesus has called us to fellowship he knows that we can strengthen each other through it. He made us for fellowship, he gave himself so that we could be the body and fellowship.

A.-- Understand that Fellowship is more than just a hang out.

1. I set apart a time with a group of men in this church.

B. Come to our meeting on time and be ready to participate

C. Make time for other functions in the church, home group, Bible study, prayer group, or anything that bring us together with other believers.

D. Be engaged in church.....

comradery is an innate tendency of 'working together' which entails a great bond between people. As part of their 'working together' everyone 'takes their place' in the group and, in so doing, creates what can be described as a 'greater organism'. The 'working together', that makes up comradery, has a goal or purpose and this seems to hold it together and give its relevance and importance

E. Encourage one another... Lift each other up

Be an encouragement in the right manner. If I go to Tom Parlett and tell him worship was great today, except for that third song maybe you should consider not doing that one again. Everything was great really appreciate what you do for the church can't wait for next week! What is taken away from that? Will that uplift Tom? This is the way we tend to through our criticism around.

We are the church.

Tom great worship today thanks for all your hard work.

Which one would you prefer?

I have been encouraged by the smallest of things most times I do not believe the person even intended to, but what they said was short and to the point.

Benediction:

Rom. 15:5-6 – May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.