

Koinonia: Man-to-Man

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Acts 2:40ff.

B. The early Christians devoted themselves to “koinonia” or “the fellowship.”

C. “Koinonia” means a lot more than Christian social activity. The New English Bible translates “koinonia” as “to share in the common life.” (1 John 1:3)

D. The usage of the word “koinonia” in its various forms can be divided into two main categories, which are each subdivided into two subcategories.

1. The first of the two main meanings is “to share or to participate together.” This means to have a community relationship.

a) In part, this means to share life together. (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3)

b) It also means to partner together in sharing a common objective or vision. (Philippians 1:5; 2 Corinthians 8:23)

II. This message will begin by focusing on our community relationship.

A. Upon our individual salvation, we become part of Christ and therefore we belong to one another. (1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 John 1:3)

1. Being in fellowship with all other believers is an objective fact- it happens automatically when we become Christians.

2. The realization of this fact is meant to provide the foundation for experiential fellowship because we belong to each other. (Romans 12:5)

a) Because we mutually belong to each other, we have a mutual responsibility for each other.

B. This mutual belonging and responsibility has several real-life applications.

1. We are to care for one another because we are one body. We need to protect each other, not gossip, criticize or condemn about one another’s failures or pain. (1 Corinthians 12:25)

2. We need to honor one another. Instead of envying, we need to respond to each other’s successes with joy. (Romans 12:26)

a) True fellowship eliminates competition.

3. We must have concern for and support the whole body of Christ, not just “our people.” God is concerned for our individual growth and we must each do our part, but God’s overall purpose is for the whole body to grow. (Ephesians 4:16)

III. Secondly, another basic meaning is “to share with one another.” This means that we meet each others’ needs.

A. We need to share with each other materially. This is the most common use of “koinonia” in the New Testament. (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:16)

B. We need to share with each other spiritually. The purpose of sharing with one another is to enhance each person’s relationship with God.

1. We should mutually teach and admonish one another. (Colossians 3:16)

a) We all must personally be in the Scriptures on our own before we can share with others. (Hebrews 5:12)

2. We must encourage one another often from what we are learning about God. We must considerably challenge each other toward practicing our faith. (Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 1:11-12)

C. God takes pleasure in true fellowship between Christians. (Malachi 3:13ff)

Application questions:

1. What does Jerry mean when he says that fellowship with other believers is an objective fact?

2. How does the perspective that believers belong to each other influence your attitude toward other believers?

3. What can you do to create context where mutual teaching and learning from the Scriptures occurs in your relationships with other believers?
