

## **True Fellowship- Part 4**

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### I. Introduction.

- A. “Koinonia” fellowship means to share with one another.
- B. The subject for today is sharing spiritual resources with each other.
- C. There is no such thing as a lone ranger in the Christian life. We are to be dependent on each other and care for one another. (Genesis 2:18)

### II. There are several scripture passages that define what it means to mutually care for one another spiritually.

- A. All of these principles must take place on a two-way basis or they will not take place at all. (Romans 1:11-12)
- B. There are several caring ministries outlined in scripture. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)
  - 1. Two people working together can produce more than each person working individually. (Colossians 3:16; Proverbs 27:17; Ephesians 5:21)
    - a) We all need each other to grow spiritually and sharpened in our knowledge of the scriptures.
    - b) This is difficult because of our fragile self-esteem.
    - c) Sharpening and teaching must be done mutually and in a caring atmosphere. (Ephesians 4:14-15)
  - 2. Two people can encourage each other. (Ecclesiastes 4:10; 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5; Hebrews 3:13, 10:25)
    - a) Encourage means to inspire courage; that is, to fortify another person to persevere in the face of difficulty. (Hebrews 10:35-36)
    - b) Courage is always connected with hope. We need encouragers in the body of Christ because there are so many believers that have need. (Psalm 142:4)
    - c) Encouragement does not mean that we commiserate or mutually feel sorry for one another. It means that we communicate that we care and more importantly, that God cares and is in control. (Matthew 10:29-30)
  - 3. We are to stimulate each other in our spiritual lives. (Ephesians 4:11; Hebrews 10:24)
    - a) When we get discouraged, we often become lethargic in regard to spirituality.
    - b) Just as charcoal bricks need to be together to stay warm, so we need to mutually spur each other on.

- c) This needs to be a careful, constant part of our walk with Christ as believers, not left to full-time Christian workers.
- 4. We are to defend each other. (Ecclesiastes 4:12)
  - a) We need to defend each other from the world, the flesh, and the devil.
  - b) We need to be in mutual defense pacts with other believers. (James 5:16)
  - c) This is difficult because it requires that we are vulnerable with each other. This is why it has to be mutual.
  - d) There are several ways we can practice defense. (James 5:16)

- 1) We confess our temptations and sins to each other- we must be open to each other.
  - 2) We must pray specifically for each other.
  - 3) We must be accountable to each other. (Nehemiah 4:9)
  - 4) Accountability, openness, and prayer work together- you need all three of them to defend each other well.

III. All of these principles are to be part of our daily practice as believers, not just our crisis management. (Hebrews 3:15)

### **Application questions:**

1. When you are in a relationship with other believers where mutual teaching and sharpening in the scriptures is taking place, what steps can you take as a group to make sure it is a caring environment?

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2. When you are trying to encourage another believer, do you find yourself tempted to simply commiserate and complain mutually? How can you infuse hope and courage into the conversation?

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3. Why is it difficult to be vulnerable to other believers? What are some of the elements of an environment that feels “safe” to be vulnerable in? How can you develop this environment in your friendships with other believers?

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