

## **Fellowship**

### **Matthew 18:20**

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“For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

Jesus assumed that His followers would gather together for regular fellowship in His name. I'm sure He would have been surprised by the notions of some modern believers who speak of worshipping God in nature at the beach or in the mountains, on the golf course or tennis courts while they neglect the assembling together in the life of the church. But for the faithful who gather for fellowship, He makes a blessed promise: He is in their midst.

What is the purpose of this fellowship? Actually, there are quite a few reasons to gather together in the name of the Lord Jesus. The context of this vital Bible verse gives us one of them: “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father, who is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).

There are many places in Scripture where we are promised answers to the prayer of faith. But here we have particular encouragement to joint prayer. When believers meet by appointment together at the throne of grace to pray about some special need or activity, they are assured of His answer.

It is interesting to note that the Lord spoke specifically here of a small gathering in His name. Too often we evaluate the success or failure of a church meeting by the number of people present. If you ask a person: “How was the meeting?” He or she is likely to answer, “Oh, it was a great meeting. The place was packed out!” It is assumed that if a large group shows up, the meeting will be a success. But if few people come, the meeting will border on failure. We must remember that it is not numbers that determine the effectiveness of Christian fellowship. It is the faith and devotion of those present.

We can gather for any number of reasons. We can meet together to grow in our knowledge of Christ. We can meet to advance the work of Christ or to be equipped in our service for Christ. But the point is this: the Christian who desires to be obedient to the Lord Jesus will actively seek the fellowship of other believers whether personally, or in small prayer and Bible study groups, or in the corporate worship of the whole assembly.

We are members of one body, the body of Christ. As such we are dependent upon each other. We need the mutual encouragement, admonition, and sharpening of our lives that Christian fellowship uniquely offers.

When the church was born, they saw it as essential. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

Fellowship depends on relationships. Keep the lines clear between yourself and your brother in the Lord. Jesus was quite insistent on this point. “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matthew 5:23-24). Forgiveness, reconciliation, patience and love are vital ingredients of true Christ-centered fellowship.

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