Fellowship

Intro: Fellowship is very important to the Christian. We ask, “Who are we to fellowship? Who are we not to fellowship?” Let us try to answer some of these questions concerning fellowship in this lesson.

I. DEFINITION OF FELLOWSHIP.
   A. It means a sharing in common, joint participation, association, communion.
   B. Fellowship involves both a spiritual and a physical side.
      1. Physical (or social).
         a. 1 Cor. 5:11 “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioneer; with such an one no not to eat.”
         b. Jude 12 “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;”
         c. While the physical is important, that which is of lasting and most important is the spiritual.
      2. Spiritual.
         a. 1 Cor. 1:9 “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”
         b. Phi. 2:1 “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,”
         c. This includes:
            (1) financial; Phi. 1:5; 4:15-16 “For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now:... 4:15Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 15:10For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”
            (2) Furthering the gospel; Phi. 1:12 “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;”
            (3) suffering; Phi. 3:10 “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”

II. FELLOWSHIP ORIGINATES WITH GOD.
   A. 1 John 1:3 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
      1. Those who are in fellowship with God are those whom I am to be in fellowship with.
      2. Our question is, “Who is in fellowship with God?”
   B. John 15:1-15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same
bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. 9As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. 11These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”

1. The one who bears fruit.
2. Clean through the word.
3. Christ Words abide in you.
4. Who abide in Christ love: by keeping His commandments.
5. If we are His friends: by doing His commandments.

C. 1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

III. FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHERS.
A. This stems from our fellowship with God.
B. For fellowship with others we must be agreed.
1. Amos 3:3 “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”
2. Psa. 119:63 “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”
3. 1 Cor. 1:9-10 “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
a. Speak the same thing.
   (1) Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
   (2) 2 Tim. 4:2 “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”
   (3) 1 Pet. 4:11 “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”
b. Same mind.
   (1) 1 Cor. 4:6 “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”
   (2) 1 Cor. 14:37 “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”
(3) Phi. 2:5 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”—the mind of Christ is revealed in the Scriptures.

c. Same judgment (our actions).

IV. LIMIT OF FELLOWSHIP.

A. Based upon the Word.

1. Rom. 16:17 “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

   a. Mark means to look at, watch, observe, scrutinize.
   b. Divisions is to stand apart.
   c. Offenses originally was the movable stick or trigger of a trap (the part of the trap to which the bait is attached). Any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall.
   d. Avoid is to turn aside and shun.

2. 2 John 9-11 “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

B. Application of this.

1. Personal sins against us; Mat. 18:15-20 “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”


   a. 1 Cor. 5:1-13 “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. 2And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12For what have I to do
to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

b. Eph. 5:11 “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

(1) Darkness used of those who are in moral or spiritual darkness, of ignorance respecting divine things and human duties and the accompanying ungodliness and immorality.

(2) Reprove is to rebuke, refute, convict by bringing to light, to expose.

c. 2 The. 3:6 “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

(1) Withdraw is to avoid, to abstain from familiar intercourse with.

(2) Disorderly is with slackness, like soldiers not keeping rank.

d. 2 The. 3:14-15 “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

(1) Note means to make, distinguish by marking. cf. Cain had a mark placed upon him by God.

(2) This is done so he will turn upon himself to produce a feeling of shame.

3. When one becomes divisive; Tit. 3:10-11 “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; 11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

a. Heretick is one who chooses a thing, factious, cause divisions by party spirit.

b. Subverted is to turn or twist out, to pervert or corrupt.

Conclusion: When is it that we must cease fellowship with someone else?

1. When a person sins against me personally and refuses to repent:

2. When one by his actions (morally) transgresses the Word:

3. When one teaches a doctrine that is contrary to God’s Word that would divide or split the church or that would cause one to be lost (live contrary to the Word):

Then we must mark that individual and have no fellowship with him.