

UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP
Outline for "First Principles Class"
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INTRODUCTION:

1. With whom do you like to work?
2. God desires that Christians live together in peace (Ps. 133:1).
3. When someone mentions unity or fellowship, what comes to mind?
4. Frequently, man's views about topics of truth will vary widely from what God says.
5. Relative to unity and fellowship God should have the first word, the last word and every word in between.
6. God sets the boundaries of Christian unity and fellowship and it is His precious prerogative to do so.
 - a. God determines whom He will and will not fellowship; He determines whom we are to fellowship and whom we are not to fellowship.
 - b. He determines when fellowship is to be withdrawn and when it is to be restored.
7. God has treated the doctrine of unity and fellowship like He has the doctrine of conversion.
 - a. He sets the stipulations; He legislates the laws; He conveys the conditions; and He defines the demands.
 - b. He does the same with the doctrine of unity and fellowship.
8. God treats the topic of unity and fellowship as He does the nature of the church; He does the legislating and He is in the drivers seat ALL THE WAY.
9. This morning let us look at Christian unity and fellowship.

I. UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP MUST BE RECOGNIZED?

A. What is Unity?

1. The word unity is found only three times in the Bible (Psa. 133:1; Eph. 4:3; 4:13).
2. The word translated unity (henotes) [1775] means agreement, oneness (John 17:20,21; I Cor. 1:10).
3. Unity involves One Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God (Eph. 4:4-6).

B. What is fellowship?

1. One word translated fellowship (koinonia) means fellowship with participation in anything.
 - a. Vine's defines fellowship as "communion, sharing in common."
 - b. This word is translated fellowship 12 times in the New Testament (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 1:9; II Cor. 8:4; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; I John 1:3,6,7).
 - c. The same word is also translated: Communion four time (I Cor. 10:16; II Cor. 6:14; 13:14), distribution one time (II Cor. 9:13), contribution one time (Rom. 15:26), communication one time (Phe. 6) and to communicate one time (Heb. 13:16).
2. Another word translated fellowship (kiononos) means to make anything common, a partaker, to share, cultivating a loving fellowship.
 - a. This word is translated fellowship one time (I Cor. 10:20).
 - b. This word is also translated partaker five times (Matt. 23:30; I Cor. 10:18; II Cor. 1:7; I Peter 5:1; II Peter 1:4), partner three time (Luke 5:10; II Cor. 8:23; Phe. 17), and companion one time (Heb. 10:33).
3. Another word translated fellowship (metoxe) means partnership and seems to have a more restricted sense than other forms of fellowship (II Cor. 6:14).

4. Another word translated fellowship (koinoneo) means to have fellowship, to be partaker, to communicate, to distribute.
 - a. This word is translated partaker five times (Rom. 15:27; I Tim. 5:22; Heb. 2:14; I Peter 4:13; II John 11), communicate two times (Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:15), and distribute one time (Rom. 12:13).
 - b. This word is translated fellowship in the ASV (Phil. 4:15).
 5. Another word translated fellowship (sungkoinoneo) [4790] means to have fellowship with, to communicate with, and be partaker of.
 - a. This is translated have no fellowship with one time (Eph. 5:11).
 - b. This word is translated communicate with one time (Phil 4:14), and be partaker of one time (Rev. 18:4).
- C. A Christians must recognize that fellowship means much more than merely saying I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (James 2:19).

II. UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP ARE REQUIRED.

- A. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are described as fellow helpers (II Cor. 8:23).
- B. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are described as fellow citizens (Eph. 2:19).
- C. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are described as fellow soldiers (Phil. 2:25; Phe. 2).
- D. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are described as fellow servants (Col. 1:7; 4:7; Rev. 19:10; 22:9; 6:11).
- E. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are fellow disciples (John 11:16).
- F. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are fellow heirs (Eph. 3:6).
- G. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are fellow workers (Col. 4:11).
- H. Unity and fellowship are required because Christians are described as fellow laborers (Phil. 4:3; Phe. 24; I Thess. 3:2).

III. UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP ARE THE RESULTS OF BEING RECONCILED TO GOD (Eph. 2:14-16).

- A. One is reconciled to God by being obedient to the gospel of Christ.
 1. Those on the day of Pentecost that obeyed the gospel of Christ continued in fellowship (Acts 2:42).
 2. 3,000 obeyed the gospel of Christ by being baptized for the remission of sins, then they were added by the Lord to His church, the church of Christ, (Acts 2:38-47).
- B. But one must remain in fellowship with God to enjoy the unity which is the results of fellowship (I John 1:7).

IV. UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP WILL BE REALIZED.

- A. Unity and fellowship will be realized in our worship to God (John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; I Thess. 5:17; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6,7; and hearing the word of God).
- B. Unity and fellowship will be realized in our work (I Cor. 3:9).
- C. Unity and fellowship will be realized in our benevolence (II Cor. 8:4).
- D. Unity and fellowship will be realized in our evangelism (Phil. 4:14,15; Matt. 28:18-20).

V. UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP ARE RESTRICTED.

- A. Unity and fellowship is conditional upon one walking in the light (I John 1:7-10; Eph.

5:11).

- B. Unity and fellowship is conditional upon one walking in the truth (II John 4; III John 3).
- C. Unity and fellowship is conditional upon one walking according to God's commandments (II John 6).
- D. Therefore unity and fellowship is conditional upon one obeying the gospel of Christ.

VI. UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP CAN BE REMOVED.

- A. Jesus said it could be removed for personal offenses (Matt. 18:15-17).
- B. Paul said it could be and should be removed (Rom. 16:17,18; I Cor. 5:1-13; Eph. 5:11; II Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 1:19,20; 6:5; Titus 3:10,11). Would this not include those individuals and congregation who have left the Word of God?
- C. John said it could be and should be removed (II John 9-11)
- D. Those who are not following the Word of God are not in unity or fellowship with God, therefore, if we are in unity and fellowship with God, we not in fellowship with them. What those who are attempting to do the Lord's work through man-made organizations and foundations?
 - 1. What about those who are supporting the Missionaries Societies?
 - 2. What about the International Health Care Foundation an organization that has been around over twenty years doing medical work and benevolence for the church?
 - 3. What about the Dist. Relief Foundation out of Nashville?
 - 4. What about the African Christian Schools foundation with its CEO?

VII. UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP CAN BE RESTORED (James 5:19,20).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Unity and fellowship are very important Bible doctrines.
- 2. God has the first, last and middle word concerning Bible unity and fellowship.
- 3. Unity and fellowship must be recognized, they are required, they are the results of being reconciled to God, unity and fellowship must be realized, but they are restricted, unity and fellowship can and in some cases must be removed, but unity and fellowship can be restored.
- 4. You are not in unity and fellowship with God the Father, Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit and the children of God (Christians) if you have never obeyed the gospel of Christ.
- 5. There are no Christians in the denominations of the world, therefore we are not in unity or fellowship with them because they are not in unity and fellowship with God.
- 6. There are many today who have left the unity and fellowship of God. There are many individuals and there are many congregations which have left the fellowship of God.
- 7. Therefore there are many who need to return to the Lord where unity and fellowship can be restored if they will repent (James 5:19,20).
- 8. If either an individual or congregation will not repent then there can be no fellowship with them.