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| <p><b>What is Authority?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fellowship (Gr. <i>koinonia</i>) = “partnership, participation, communion” (Moulton 235)... “association” (LS 440).</li> <li>• Koinoneo = “associated, share” (Moulton 235).</li> <li>• Metochos = “To share or partake in” (Moulton 267)</li> <li>• Sugkoino = “joint partaker, share” (Moulton 380).</li> <li>• Meris = “a portion in common” (Moulton 264)</li> </ul>   | <h1 style="margin: 0;">Fellowship</h1> <p style="margin: 10px 0;"><i>“Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what <b>fellowship</b> have righteousness and iniquity? Or what <b>communion</b> hath light with darkness? And what <b>concord</b> hath Christ with Belial? Or what <b>portion</b> hath a believer with an unbeliever?”</i><br/>II Corinthians 6:14-15</p>  | <p>People are generally <b>drawn</b> to each other to participate, associate, share, and partake with one another because of common interests. Some are drawn to each other due to a common interest in things of this world (II Tim. 4:9-10; I Jn. 2:15-17), physical family (Matt. 10:35ff), religious ideas (Acts 15:1-2; I Tim. 6:3-4, 11; II Tim. 2:14-19; II Jn. 9ff), and work (Acts 18:1-3). That which draws people together to experience Christian fellowship is interest and reverence for the Word of God (cf. <b>Jn. 6:44; Gal. 2:9-10</b>).</p> |
| <p><b>What things do Christians share in?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Godhead (I Cor. 1:9; II Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1; I Jn. 1:3,6).</li> <li>• Salvation (the grace of God) (Rom. 11:17; I Cor. 1:9; Phil. 1:7).</li> <li>• Brethren (Unity in truth) (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 10:16; Gal. 2:9).</li> <li>• Suffering of Jesus (Phil. 3:10; I Pet. 4:13; II Tim. 3:12).</li> <li>• Caring for needy saints (Rom. 12:13; 15:26; II Cor. 8:4).</li> <li>• Supporting Gospel preachers (Gal. 6:6; Phil. 1:5; 4:15).</li> <li>• Sin (II Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:11; I Tim. 5:22; Rev. 18:4).</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Distinguishing Characteristics of Christians in fellowship:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian is called into spiritual fellowship (I Cor. 1:9; II Thess. 2:13-14; I Pet. 2:9).</li> <li>• Sanctified from the world of sin (Lev. 20:7-8; Jn. 17:17; Col. 1:22).</li> <li>• Known as the “sons of light” as opposed to the “sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6-7).</li> <li>• Christians thereby “test” all “spirits” (I Jn. 4:1) before “receiving” one into fellowship (cf. Matt. 18:1-5).</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>What about those who want to be in Fellowship with us yet they do not share in the Reverence, Respect, and Obedience of the Gospel Message?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bible rejects the idea of <b>unity in diversity</b> of beliefs (cf. Jn. 17:14-20; II Jn. 9-11). God rejected those of old who tried to mar the lines of true fellowship (cf. Ezek. 44:4-9) and so He does today (cf. I Cor. 10:14-22; II Tim. 1:13-14; II Jn. 9ff).</li> <li>• Some may consider the testing Christian unloving, judgmental, and arrogant (cf. Ezra 4:3; Gal. 4:16).</li> <li>• True <b>love</b> for the souls of men will not tolerate alternate foundations of fellowship for the sake of fabricated peace (cf. I Jn. 4:7-17).</li> </ul>   |  |  |
| <p><b>Does my Fellowship with God change my Fellowship with the World once I become a Christian?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes! I am no longer drawn to those of the world through sinful acts of so called fun (cf. Eph. 5:11).</li> <li>• Rather than participating in sin with the world I now teach and shame the world of their sins (Acts 2; 22:16; I Pet. 2:9; II Thess. 2:13-14).</li> <li>• My mind will also change toward erring brethren. My first reaction is to turn them back to the Lord (Matt. 18:15ff; I Thess. 5:15). Some, however, will be so stubborn in their sin that they must be taken away from among the faithful (I Cor. 5:2, 5). The Christian is to “turn away” from all persistent erring brethren (Rom. 16:17-18; II Tim. 3:1-9). The factious and false teachers are to be altogether avoided (Titus 3:10-11).</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <p><b>Conclusion:</b> When one becomes a Christian he or she is a new creature in Christ Jesus (cf. II Cor. 5:17). Those old sinful interests are done away with and the things that now fascinate and occupy our minds are the things of Christ (cf. Gal. 2:20-21). We will gravitate to others who share a like precious faith (II Pet. 1:1). My associates, partners, and those I share a common interest with will be those of the “<i>brotherhood</i>” (I Pet. 2:17). Through my spiritual growth I begin more and more to “<i>prefer</i>” brethren than those of the world (Rom. 12:10). The fellowship of saints in Christ Jesus is indeed sweet. The best of friends are made in the local churches.</p>   |  |  |