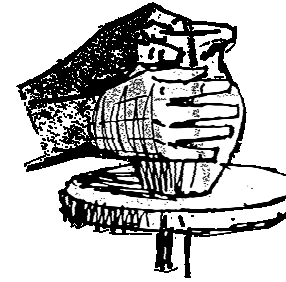


His Workmanship Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus for good works."*

—Ephesians 2:10



Vol. XXIII

March 2, 2014

No. 9

Isaiah 64:8

Fellowship of the Body, Part 1, The Basis of Fellowship by John McArthur

The true church is one body. All the members of that body are members of one another, like a human body. No member of the body of Christ exists detached from the rest of the body. We are all members one of another, and no one member can escape his responsibility toward all the other members. A healthy body's function is absolutely dependent on the faithful service of all of the members to God and to one another.

Unity in the body exists in two ways: positional unity and practical unity—what we are in position and practice. By the very fact that we are believers in Christ, we are one in position. That is, we have all been placed into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 12:13. So we are all in the body by position/place. Our positional unity is evident by the fact that the Holy Spirit placed us into the one body and that He dwells within all of us. So from a positional standpoint, we are one—all having been placed into the body by the same Spirit, all having the same Spirit dwelling within us, all being redeemed, all being children of God, all being members of the body of Christ. That's positional unity. We are a unit; we are a unit by virtue of salvation. We are one in Christ. We are all

members of the same body. We are members of one another. We all have the same life, eternal life, life in Christ. We all have the same head, Christ, Who is the head of the entire body. Positionally we are one.

Moreover, we should be one in practice. All Christians are one in Christ. That positional oneness might guarantee that we are one in practice, because we should be following the same Christ, doing His same will. But that is not always the case, because we often fail to follow Him and do His will. Although we may be one in position, we are not always one in practice. Just look around and see all the little organizations, the cliques of people, and the ones who stand here and say we don't associate with those there. We have divisions and factions, so in practice we are not one.

Service and Fellowship. The practical unity of the body is manifest by two very important things: service and fellowship. Service is using our spiritual gifts to serve each other; fellowship is sharing our love with each other. When Jesus was with His apostles at the end, he prayed, "*Father, I pray that they may be one,*" Jn 17:21. Now, He was not praying for our positional oneness. That is accomplished by

salvation. He was praying that we would act like one, that we would be one in practice as we are in position. So when we speak of the local church, we're talking about the importance of practical oneness, that we are really one in practice, not just in position. The first thing that manifests our oneness is service. God enables us to serve one another by giving us spiritual gifts. Every believer has certain spiritual gifts, given by grace. By serving each other, we are in effect bringing about practical oneness. The second thing that brings us practical unity is fellowship, our connectedness. The word for fellowship in the New Testament is *koinonia*, which means communion or intimate communication. When God designed men, He made us for fellowship. God said, "*It is not good for man to be alone,*" Gen 2:8. We were not made to be isolated. Permanent solitude is not the will of God. People were made for fellowship. And the church, the body of Christ, is a body for fellowship. Larson said, "The neighborhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit...to the fellowship Christ wants to give His church. It's an imitation dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than

continued on p. 2

“May I know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” —Philippians 3:10

reality, but it's permissive accepting and inclusive fellowship. It is unshockable. It is democratic. You can tell people secrets, and they usually don't tell others or even want to. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers."

Now this need for fellowship is the genius of the church. But it is not met by Sunday worship or the typical mass aggregations of unrelated, disconnected people. A desperate need for personal, intimate fellowship exists in the church today. This intimacy, like using the gifts in service, is necessary for our practical unity. Fellowship is absolutely essential to the life of the body. The New Testament teaches us about fellowship in five areas: its basis (what fellowship is based on), its nature (what it's like), its danger (what interrupts it), its responsibilities (what maintains it), and its result (what happens when we are in fellowship). We address the basis of fellowship today, the rest over the next few weeks.

1. The basis of fellowship. What is fellowship based on? A lot of phony fellowship goes on today. You read about it in the ecumenical nonsense where denominations get together on all kinds of pretenses. You see it in denominational recreation and entertainment. That's not true Biblical fellowship. So-called evangelicals decide that they're going to cooperate with liberals in certain ventures. That's not true fellowship. The basis of our fellowship is not the need of our community. The basis is not some common goal for social ends. The basis is not that we're not in any denomination. What is the basis of our fellowship? The basis of fellowship is clear-

ly delineated in 1 John 1. John recounted his firsthand experience with Jesus Christ. "*That which we have heard and seen and our hands have handled concerning the word of life, we declare unto you... That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you,*" 1 Jn 1:1, 3. He was proclaiming the gospel. The reason he proclaimed the gospel is so "*that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ,*" v. 3. The gospel John declared was about the "*Word of life,*" v. 1, Jesus Christ. "I'm declaring unto you the gospel. The reason I'm doing that is because the gospel is the basis of fellowship. I want you to know the same God and the same Christ that I know in order that we may have common ground for fellowship." Thus, the proclamation of the gospel is not an end in itself. The reason we preach the gospel is so we

A desperate need for personal, intimate fellowship exists in the church today.

can have fellowship. Isn't what John said interesting? The point of the preaching of the gospel is to create fellowship. The word *koinonia*, or fellowship, means a mutual communication, having something in common. In other Greek forms *koinonas* means a partner, and *koinoneto*, the verb, means to share. So *koinonia* is sharing partnership, togetherness, commonality, fellowship, mutuality, communion. Do believers have a common ground? Do they have a *koinonia* or a *koinonas*? Are we partners in something? Do we have something that we can share? Of course, we do—because our fellowship is graced, is based on the same common ground. Who is this fellowship with? With God and His Son Jesus Christ and His

Holy Spirit. How ludicrous to accept the atonement of Christ and to accept all that He's done for us, and then to cut ourselves off from the fellowship that we have been placed into. Proclaiming the gospel, then, is not an end in itself. The goal of proclaiming of the gospel is oneness—oneness with Christ, a fellowship with God. This unity with God is not an organization, but a fellowship; not a hierarchy, not a structure, but a fellowship; not an organizational chart on a printed sheet, but a fellowship. The meaningful fellowship created by Christ and between believers and God is first vertical, but it extends horizontally to every other believer in Christ. That beautiful communion between Christ and His disciples in the days He was on earth was not to be limited just to them, but to all who came after and believed in Christ—we were to be introduced into that very same fellowship. The gospel provided fellowship for all generations, fellowship between Christians and the Godhead and fellowship among each other. "*That which we have seen and heard declare we under you, we preach the gospel, that you may have fellowship with us,*" v.3. We are in the fellowship of the apostles. We're part of their fellowship. But our fellowship is not only with other disciples, it is first with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We're all wrapped up in a total fellowship involving the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and every other believer in history.

This is our fellowship. So the purpose of the gospel proclamation is not just salvation, but fellowship: with God, Christ, and all other believers. That's what salvation did for you—it made you a part of a fellowship. You had no fellowship with God before

continued on p. 3



Let your faith be seen in 2014
 "I rejoice to see your good order
 and the steadfastness of your faith
 in Christ." —Colossians 2:5

Basis of Fellowship, from p. 2
 salvation. You had no fellowship with believers until salvation. At the moment you put on Christ in baptism, you entered into fellowship with God, fellowship with Christ, and fellowship with every other believer. So what then is the basis of our fellowship? It is one word, salvation. That's the basis of our fellowship. We have the same Savior, the same God, the same faith, fellowship. Our fellowship originates with God. It was God's plan to bring us into fellowship. "God is faithful, by Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord," 1 Cor 1:9. God called us to be in fellowship with His Son. We're not detached from God. We're in fellowship with Him. God is not a mere cosmic force—He's a person Who called us into fellowship with Him. Through His sovereign grace He brought us into fellowship. How did He do it? By His grace and power. He called us. How did we respond to His call? We put our faith in Christ, repented of our sins, and entered into His covenant fellowship in baptism. Each one comes to God the same way, by faith. "To Titus, a true son in our common faith: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior," Tit 1:4. Our common faith is the gospel; Jude calls it "our common salvation," v. 3. The common faith, the common salvation is the teaching of the gospel. How did we enter into the fellowship? By the common faith. We all have the same hope of heaven, and we came into the

Discipleship Here At Home

same body by the same Holy Spirit to the same God, through the same Christ with the same faith and the same baptism, Eph 4:1-7. The basis of our unity and our fellowship is a common Father, a common Savior, a common faith, a common baptism and salvation.

We have fellowship with the Godhead, and that's the basis of our fellowship with each other. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all," 2 Cor 13:14. Communion is *koinonia* fellowship. So our fellowship is with Christ, God, the Holy Spirit, and one another. This is exciting to realize, that we are in fellowship with God. We share communion and communication with Him. The glorious symbol of our fellowship is the Lord's supper communion table as we gather around it. His death was what established our fellowship, first with God and then with each other. No wonder the early church was urged to come together around the Lord's table. Their communion was the symbol of their divine fellowship and also the time when they could lock their arms together and share in their fellowship with each other. Fellowship is the common and shared participation in the grace of God in the salvation of Christ in the blessing of the Holy Spirit. It's a communion that we all experience. Our fellowship with each other stems from our fellowship with the Godhead/Trinity. This is our fellowship.

Thus, the apostolic objective in preaching was to create fellowship, a community of believers arising out of a divine fellowship. A divine fellowship existed, and because of the divine fellowship reaching down to man, a human fellowship was created. You might put it this way: fellowship is not merely one aspect of the body of Christ; it is the goal of the gospel to create fellowship. "This is the message which we have heard from Him

continued on p. 4

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Letha Fink's husband **Ed**—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors
Mina Gonzalez—fell on ice on her way to Bible study Wed night;; mild concussion, whiplash
Randy Reames's mother, **Una**, in her 80s—cancerous colon tumor removed recently
Sandra Perry's daughter, **April Dunn**—to have C-section 3/5; fifth child; Sandra's sister, **Sharon Rupinen**—upper GI tests; surgery expected
Judy Sartin's aunt **Vallie Ek**, age 87—uterine cancer, heart failure; hospice; pray she returns to Lord in her last days; also **Judy's** son **Dave's** aunt **June**, 80, passed away last week; **Judy's** cousin's wife, **Lynne James**, breast cancer
Mark Campbell—home from hospital for severe abdominal pain, bleeding
Josh McDonald, a friend of **Kory Tope**, and daughter **Casey**—unwanted divorce
David Hull, a friend of **Randy Reames**—leukemia relapse; infection; pray open to gospel
Caleb Howell's friend **Cage**—body rejected liver transplant; colon cancer

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Bill Dennis—heart issues
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome
Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house
Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;
Virginia, macular degeneration; high BP
Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes; kidney failure, may need dialysis
Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis
Judy Sartin's grandson **Tristen**—autism
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Traveling The **Campbells** will go to FL Wed for week of work and visiting family; **Wilkeses** Thurs to San Antonio.

Job concerns **Linda Szymanski** REJOICE: **Lorenzo Gonzalez** has accepted a job with Walgreen's corporate office in Chicago.

Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April—blood platelets low; **Christina Adams's** daughter **Kayla**, May; **Lauren Gonzalez**, August 31.

The Basis of Fellowship, from p. 3

and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin," 1 Jn 1:5-7.

Fellowship is based on forgiveness of sin. John wrote that sin is inevitable, 1 Jn 1:10, but "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," 1 Jn 2:1, and "I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake," 2:12. So the basis of all fellowship is a right relationship to Christ and God. How blessed we are: "David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin,'" Rm 4:6-8. We were once dead in sin, but Jesus has made us alive to Him, Col 2:13; Eph 2:1-6. Since we have been forgiven, in fellowship we forgive our brothers, Eph 4:32; Mt 18:21-35; 6:12-14.

Fellowship is based upon God's grace. Our fellowship with our fellow Christians is also based on forgiveness and grace to one another. It is based on my personal faith that God will forgive. It is based on confessing my sins, asking Him to forgive me, continue to be in my life, and continue to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Our fellowship with one another is also based on trust of each other, faith that our brothers will give us grace and forgiveness, trust that we can be honest with our brothers and confess our sins to them and be healed, Jas 5:16. When we do that, we are in fellowship with both God and our brethren. That's exciting!

The goal of the gospel is to create an eternal fellowship. True fellowship isn't based on church attendance. It isn't based on good works. It isn't based on claiming to be in the fellowship of Christ. It's based on salvation, forgiveness through the blood of Christ. The fellowship that we have with Jesus Christ is something that we want every person to have. If your heart is lonely, hungers for answers, wants to know truth and reality, get in the fellowship. By believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, depending solely on Him for forgiveness of your sins, and entering His covenant in baptism, He will come into your life. When that happens, you'll come into fellowship with God, and you will walk with Him in the light and be in His presence. You will also be in fellowship with other Christians, because you have a common hope of heaven, a common God, a common salvation, a common and eternal joy forever. That's what the fellowship's all about. We're here to share with you. If you don't know Jesus Christ today and you're not in this fellowship, we beg you to receive Him, to ask Him to cleanse your life and forgive your sin, to call on Him in baptism, Ax 22:16, and He will place you into fellowship with Himself. Next week: *The nature of fellowship* (what it is like).

Poudre Valley (Loveland) evangelism: Kory Tope is helping with the Loveland church today and next Sunday while the evangelist, Richard Thetford, is away preaching a gospel meeting. Jeff Wilkes is preaching and teaching there this morning; Jonathan Hadders this afternoon.



meets at

13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
720-295-4530

info@thechurchingolden.com

www.thechurchingolden.com

Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
---------------	---------

Sunday morning:

Adult Bible study, "Come out from among Them" Series, 2 Cor 6:17:

"Fellowship Halls and Kitchens,"

Larry Campbell

Sermon:

"Calvinism's TULIP: Total Hereditary Depravity," part 2 of a series,

Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon theme for March— CONNECTION

Sermon: *"Three Critical Connections,"*

DeWayne Howell