



# Fundamentals for Facilitating Fellowship

Psalm 133:1

# Fundamentals for Facilitating Fellowship

- Psalm 133:1 - (A Song of Ascents, of David) “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing-- Life forevermore.”
- “What greater thing is there for two human souls, than to feel that they are joined for life--to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?”  
(George Eliot)

# Fundamentals for Facilitating Fellowship

- “Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers met together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become 'unity' conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.” (A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*)
- “Fellowship is a place of grace, where mistakes aren't rubbed in but rubbed out. Fellowship happens when mercy wins over justice.” (Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*)

# Phil. 2:1-11

- “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

# Fundamentals for Facilitating Fellowship

- When we consider that Jesus gave up all to serve us and our brethren, how can we not do the same for each other in return?
- There are not many people, even among innocent children, that haven't had a disagreement with someone at some time.
- It's how we handle disagreements that sets us apart as God's children in fellowship with each other.
- It's not how we respond to our friends that make us Christians; it is we respond to those with whom we strongly disagree.

# Fundamentals for Facilitating Fellowship

- There are times when we must disagree with each other, especially when truth is at stake.
- The following principles apply to this, but the primary emphasis of this lesson is to consider disagreements over something other than the truth

# Pursue Peace

- Rom. 12:18 - “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”
- Christians need to be bridge builders, not bridge burners.

# Let Love Live

- Rom. 13:8 - “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”
- If we see everyone around us as persons loved by both God and us, we will be less inclined to disagree disagreeably with them and be more inclined to give their perspective a respectful hearing.

# Judge With Righteous Judgment

- John 7:24 - “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”
- There is a difference between what we think is right and what is truly right.

# Judge With Righteous Judgment

- Rom. 14:1-5, 10-12 - “Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. 5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind... 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

# Judge With Righteous Judgment

- If we make our conscience the standard by which others must live, we will be lost.
- Do not misapply this point; sin is not a matter of conscience

# Perceive People

- 1Cor. 12:6 - “And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”
- People are like snowflakes; there are no two who will ever be completely alike in all things.

# Listen Liberally

- James 1:19 - “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”
- Often problems can be prevented or solved simply by listening long enough to let the other person fully express themselves.

# Watch Your Words

- James 3:8 - “But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”
- No body part can get into trouble faster than the tongue.

# Abolish Anger

- Eph. 4:31 - “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”
- It is easy to get angry during personal disagreements. Anger will only make a bad situation worse.

# Commend The Correct

- Rom. 1:8 - “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
- Paul never shunned to address problems in the churches, but he always began and ended with what was right with the brethren

# Rebuke The Wrong

- Luke 17:3 - “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.”
- When someone has sinned, it is a command of God that fellow Christians rebuke him.

# Repent Of Wrong

- 2Cor. 7:10 - “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”
- We must be humble enough to realize that this is what God requires of us.

# Forgive The Penitent

- Luke 17:4 - “And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him.”
- If God forgives and forgets, why don't His children do the same?
- Isa. 38:17 - “Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.”
- Gal. 6:2 - “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

# Tell The Truth

- Eph. 4:25 - “Therefore, putting away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.”
- In times of confrontation, it is difficult to be honest, because we are afraid it will make things worse. However, nothing truly gets solved until the whole truth is expressed

# Seek To Serve

- 1Peter 5:5 - “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”
- Pride often causes conflict, is the primary fuel to keep it going, and is one of the greatest barriers to resolving it

# Be Consistent In Conduct

- Rom. 12:9 - “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”
- Hypocrisy allows those of us who disagree with us to also justly accuse us. It takes attention from the truth our brother needs to see, and puts the focus on our own sins. Both of us lose.

# Be Willing To Suffer Loss

- 1Cor. 6:7-8 - “Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!”
- Often, things don't work out our way. We should be willing to accept loss for the sake of peace and unity

# Look To The Lord

- 1Peter 2:21 - “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps”
- What did Jesus do when He disagreed with others?

## James 3:13-18

- “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”