

## Set Free: Devoted to Fellowship

In **Acts 2:42**, the early Christians continually devoted themselves to fellowship. But what does that mean and how do we follow their example?

Interestingly, the Greek word translated “fellowship” here is used 19 times in the New Testament. Despite modern misuse, it is never once used to refer to eating, except in reference to the Lord’s Supper (**I Corinthians 10:16**). The term itself simply means participation or sharing.

“Fellowship” was used to speak of fulfilling financial needs of Christians. See **Romans 15:26** and **II Corinthians 9:13** where the word is translated “contribution.” It is used to refer to sharing a relationship with Jesus. See **I Corinthians 1:9** and **I John 1:6**. It is used to describe having a relationship through Christ with other Christians, that is, describing our joint participation in forgiveness (**I John 1:3, 7**). It is used to describe participating in Jesus’ sufferings in **Philippians 3:10**. It is used to describe giving approval to another’s work when it said the Jerusalem brethren gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship in **Galatians 2:9**. In **Philemon 6** it is used to describe the participation in the faith of the Lord.

“Fellowship” is participating with other Christians in spiritual and godly communion. We are in fellowship when we walk together in Christ, when we worship together, when we care for each other, when we help each other, when we edify each other. When we think of fellowship, we need to remember **Romans 14:17**: “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking...” (ESV). We have not enjoyed fellowship just because we had a pitch-in.

The fellowship of these first Christians was described, I believe, in **Acts 2:46-47**. They continued daily in the temple and with each other from house to house. The fellowship was not the eating of meals together. The fellowship was the communion of mind through worship together, it was the edification through praising God together, it was the caring for others by sharing food with those in need. Being devoted to fellowship meant being devoted to God’s people.

If we wish to follow in our early brethren’s footsteps, we must share with one another. We must care for those in need. We must edify and study with each other, praying with each other, and praising God together. We must worship with each other. Fellowship provides freedom because it provides partners for strength, encouragement, and accountability.

The reality is we cannot maintain freedom from sin and Satan without spiritual relationships. If we try to fight sin on our own, we will lose. Even though the newest Army slogan is “An Army of One,” you don’t see the Army sending just one man to fight in Iraq or Afghanistan. They send people in platoons, battalions, divisions. Just so, we need to be devoted to our battalion, if you will. We need to be devoted to one another. We need to be devoted to fellowship. It is key to avoiding Satan’s traps.

Are we devoted to fellowship with each other, walking together spiritually, sharing with each other, and caring for each other?

More on this to come.

—Edwin L. Crozier