

“Fellowship with God’s Family”
Hebrews 10:19-24, page 1177

Introduction:

1. Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His earthly ministry.
2. The first few weeks of His earthly ministry were spent in calling twelve men to become the spiritual leaders of the New Testament church.
 - A. These men, along with their families, would be the New Testament church family.
 - B. Following the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, this group of believers gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. *Acts 2.*
3. The church was and is very important to Jesus Christ.
 - A. *Ephesians 5:23: “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”*
 - B. *Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.”*
 - C. *Ephesians 5:27: “...that He must present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*
4. The fellowship of God’s people in a church family is vital to living a committed Christian life.

I. Jesus knows we need each other. “Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone. Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

- A. It is interesting that Solomon focuses on the advantage of having friends to help us in the practical aspects of life:
 1. Working together in the area of physical labor.
 2. Providing warmth when cold.
 3. Providing protection when under attack from another person.
- B. This is a valid picture of how the New Testament church family should minister to each other:
 1. Assist each other in providing the necessities of life: houses, transportation, yard work, etc.
 2. Assist each other in providing warmth, food, clothing, etc.
 3. Assist each other when a member of the church family is under attack by other people and Satan.
 4. Become aware of any need a brother or sister may have, and then minister to them!
- C. The church family is designed and commanded to become that three-stranded cord that binds us together.

II. Jesus knew we need close friendships.

- A. Developing close friendships is both rewarding and dangerous.
 1. I am hopeful that each of us has realized the blessing of having close friends.
 2. I am sure that each of us has felt the pain caused when a close friend betrays us.
- B. No one knows the ups and downs of developing a close relationship better than Jesus.
 1. Jesus spent three years developing a close friendship with the twelve disciples.
 2. During His darkest hour, all the disciples abandoned Jesus, and Peter denied he ever knew Jesus.
 3. In a very real sense, Jesus suffered and died without the support of His closest friends.

III. Jesus urges us, yes, commands us, to develop a loving fellowship with the believers in a local church family.

- A. "United we stand; divided we fall."
- B. Jesus makes it very clear that our relationship with our heavenly Father depends upon the relationships we have with other people.
 - 1. *Matthew 6:14-15: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*
 - 2. *Mark 11:25: "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."*
 - 3. *Hebrews 10:25: "...not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."*
- C. We really do need each other:
 - 1. Friendships fill an emotional need that God created in us.
 - 2. Friendships enable us to fully enjoy special events in life (camping).
 - 3. Friendships help us stay focused and strong concerning our philosophy of life (Birds of a feather flock together.).
 - 4. Friendships provide a helping hand during times of need (Amish barn-raising).
 - 5. Friendships help us complete projects (Gregg Fellowship Center).
 - 6. Friendships provide security and companionship.
- D. We are blessed to have our church family—God's family!

Conclusion:

- 1. Easter is all about loving people. *John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*
- 2. Jesus emphasizes the need of loving one another and having fellowship with each other:
 - A. *John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*
 - B. *Romans 13:8: "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law."*
 - C. *Galatians 5:14: "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"*
- 3. Jesus fulfilled this new commandment of loving everyone during His earthly ministry.
- 4. Even in His death, He made sure that His mother was loved and would receive the care she needed. *John 19:26-27: "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."*
- 5. Everything worthwhile in life depends upon love and fellowship.
- 6. God created us to love and fellowship with Him. *Matthew 22:36-37: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'"*
- 7. God commands us to love and fellowship with each other. *Matthew 22:38-40: "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*
- 8. This is the purpose of Easter and Christianity.
 - A. It is not about palm branches, Easter lilies, special programs and Easter brunch (very good).
 - B. Easter is all about reinstating a personal relationship with Jehovah God through the salvation provided by Jesus Christ.