



# 10 ATTRIBUTES OF FELLOWSHIP

## ROMANS 12:9-21

FELLOWSHIP IS LOVE ACTED OUT WITH EACH OTHER  
AS THE SUBJECT.

- **Romans 12:9-21** Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.
- 14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

- 17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.
- 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord.
- 20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."
- 21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

## • **1. Love one another. v. 9-10**

- Love – agape, unconditional, sacrificial – God and Jesus love!
- Brotherly love – “phileo” - family love, friendship love - Devoted and – devoted – actively caring and committed to each other (love)
- A church that understands fellowship is a church that loves each other.

## • **2. Honor one another. v. 10**

- Honor – something weighty, valuable, high esteem, dignity, respect.
- When we honor a commitment, we are giving that commitment respect and dignity by taking it seriously.
- When we honor a person, we give that person respect and dignity by taking them seriously.
- Fellowship means that we honor others.

### • **3. Worship with one another. v. 11-12**

- We need to worship God, and we need to do that together!
- We can worship on our own, of course, but the coming together of God's people to worship is also one of our strongest expressions of fellowship.
- Worship draws us closer to God and closer to each other.
- Worship promotes fellowship!
- How can we best worship and serve the Lord?
  - By being zealous for Him, passionate desire for Him, being joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer.
- Fellowship means that we worship together.

## • 4. Be gracious to one another. v. 13

- Fellowship means that take care of each other within the church, and also that we care for those who come to visit or check us out!
- We're pretty good at looking out for each other, but how well do we do at making sure the visitor(s) amongst us are truly cared for?

10 for a smile from a worshiper

10 for a greeting from someone sitting nearby

100 for an exchange of names

200 for an invitation to have coffee

200 for an invitation to return

1000 for an introduction to another worshiper

2000 for an invitation to meet the pastor

On this scale, eleven of the eighteen churches earned fewer than 100 points.

Five actually received less than 20

- The conclusion: The doctrine may be biblical, the singing inspirational, the sermon uplifting, but when a visitor finds nobody who cares whether there here, there not likely to come back."

- We need to be gracious to everyone who comes here, not just those we know. We need to practice and pursue hospitality.
- We need to be deliberate about our greeting, making everyone else feel welcome here
- It's not someone else's job; it an opportunity for all of us to enjoy.
- Fellowship means being gracious to one another.

- **5. Do not be spiteful toward one another. vv. 14, 17, 19-20**

- It's been said that, "A pat on the back is only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, but is miles ahead in results."

- Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”
- When we’re hurt by people, we want to hurt them back, we want to get revenge, we feel as if we have a right to be angry or bitter.
  - **Hurt people, Hurt people**
- We’re a congregation that has seen it’s share of battles with cancer. We have seen victories and defeats, and we also pray for many people struggling with it.
- Well, bitterness is a cancer. If it’s allowed to go unchecked, it will continue to grow. It causes pain even when we can’t see it, and it can lead to death.
- Thankfully, bitterness is treatable! We do away with it when we address it, work through it and work on loving each other afterwards.
- True fellowship means not being spiteful toward one another.



## • 6. Empathize with one another. v. 15

- Isn't it funny how a pain in a small area of the body can cause the whole body to hurt?
- A sliver in the right place, a stubbed toe, a hammered thumb – they all can give us that whole body hurt.
- Think of that on a church level - We need to rejoice and celebrate with those who rejoice and we need to mourn and weep with those who mourn.
- When someone is hurting or struggling, they don't need instruction on how to get better or downplaying the seriousness of the situation.
- What they need is someone to come alongside them and be with them and let them know that we hurt with them.
- We don't have to understand their situation. We just have to care.
- True fellowship means empathizing with one another.

## • **7. Get along with one another. v. 16, 18**

- Pursue peace.
- Peace is NOT absence of conflict, it's acceptance through conflict.
- It's agreeing to disagree.
- Churches are splitting at a record pace because there's no harmony, no peace.
- It's okay to disagree at times. After all, we're a family.
- We need to find a way to get along with each other, recognizing that there will be differences, there will be personality conflicts.
- True fellowship means getting along with one another.

## • **8. Be humble toward one another. v. 16b**

- Philippians 2:1-11 Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? 2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.
- 3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.
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- 5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. 6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, 8 he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.
- 9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## • 9. Be honorable. v. 17b

- We need to work extra hard to make sure that everyone receives fair, proper and honest treatment within the church.
- It also means that we must live out our relationships with our neighbors outside the church with integrity.
- This verse is not telling us to keep everyone happy, that's impossible in our society, or any society for that matter.
- Rather, we are being called to make sure that we act in fairness and integrity in all of our actions and relationships.
- There's nothing worse for a church then to build a reputation for playing favorites or not honoring commitments or being a bad neighbor in a community.
- We may conflict with the direction our society is going, but we must make sure that we don't give our neighbors good reason to ignore us or shut us out.
- True fellowship means being honest with one another.

## • **10. Be good to one another. v. 21**

- When we are “excellent” to each other, or better said “good to each other”, we take away the room evil has to work.
- We squeeze evil out when we let God’s goodness into our fellowship; when we play by his rules instead of our own.
- That means encouraging each other, listening to each other, forgiving each other, resolving conflicts, building each other up.
- True fellowship means being excellent to one another.

- **Conclusion:**

- We need to Love one another, Honor one another, Worship with one another, Be gracious to one another, not be spiteful toward one another, Empathize with one another, Get along with one another, Be humble toward one another, Be honest with one another, Be good to one another.
- Real fellowship is essentially love lived out with each other.
- Let us strive to live out God's love amongst us, because when we do that, we start to see the love of God that we talk about actually make a difference in people's lives.