



## Growth Group Discussion Questions

**Lesson:** FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

**Primary Scriptures:** I Cor. 1:4-9; II Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1-4; Phil. 3:7-11; I John 1:3  
Lesson 1 - Week of January 17, 2021

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- If you had to summarize the state of your spiritual life right now, how would you describe it?
- What is something you feel God is teaching you?
- When you think about having fellowship with God, what comes to mind?

### DISCUSSION

Fellowship is one of those words that is familiar to most followers of Christ. Time spent with other believers is routinely referred to as fellowship. How would you define the word fellowship?

The biblical concept of fellowship is not merely social time spent with other Christians. Fellowship is, after all, an English word and, therefore, does not appear in the Original text in the Bible. The term fellowship is a translation. When we read the New Testament and encounter the word fellowship, it is usually a translation of the Greek word *koinonia*, which means to have something in common with someone else or to share something. On a few occasions, in the New Testament, the term refers to literally sharing something by giving a gift or making a financial contribution to a group in need. *Koinonia*, therefore, means to be especially close to someone because you share something with them. How does this definition of *koinonia* deepen your view of what Christian fellowship is?

The most amazing and overlooked aspect of the term *koinonia* is that it is used to refer to not only our relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ but also our relationship with God. Because of Christ, the door has been opened for us to experience fellowship - *koinonia* - with God Almighty.

Let's take a close look at I Corinthians 1:4-9. *"I always thank my God for you because of His grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in Him you have been enriched in every way with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge. God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship (koinonia) with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."* What is Paul saying in these verses?

In the final verse of his second letter to the Corinthians (II Corinthians 13:14), Paul again uses the term *koinonia*. *"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship (koinonia) of the Holy Spirit be with you all."* What do you think it means to have *koinonia* with the Holy Spirit – to be close to Him because you share something together?

In Philippians 2:1-4, Paul explains how this fellowship with the Spirit should affect our mindsets and behavior. *"Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort*

*from His love, if any common sharing (koinonia) in the spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”* How should koinonia with the Holy Spirit change us, according to Paul? Is it possible to live this way without the Holy Spirit changing us from the inside out? Why or why not?

Read Philippians 3:7-11: *“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ - yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation (koinonia) in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”* In these verses, Paul expresses that he wants to know Christ through participating in His sufferings. What do you think that means?

In this lesson, we have focused on the koinonia we experience with God because of Christ. In our next lesson, we will focus on koinonia with each other. The two concepts are linked in the New Testament. Because God has invited us into the fellowship through His Word and our response to His Word through Jesus Christ, we are able to have fellowship with each other – not just polite social relationships – but genuine, spirit-led koinonia. Jesus’ disciple, John, put it this way in I John 1:3: *“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship (koinonia) with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”*

## KEYS TO REMEMBER

1. Koinonia is a word that refers to a closeness with someone because you share something in common.
2. Fellowship with God is possible because He has invited us into that relationship. We must obey His Word in order to enter His fellowship.
3. We have fellowship with God through His indwelling Spirit, which leads us to live a God-honoring life marked by humility and unity with other Christians.
4. Fellowship with each other flows from our fellowship with God.

## PRAYER FOCUS

May your fellowship with God be the catalyst and basis for other relationships. As you pray this week:

- Thank God for calling you into fellowship with Him.
- Ask God’s help to seek out true fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ.