

## **Christian Relationship of Fellowship**

### **2-3-13**

Two passages that contain a commandment for us: *Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. (1 Peter 2:17) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart (1 Peter 1:22)*

What makes brotherhood? According to Mark 3:31-35, obedience makes brotherhood. Therefore, we define the spiritual word brother as one who obeys God. At the same time, there is something else that meets this definition. In I John 1:5-10 we read that Fellowship is the condition that exists when two or more people obey God. Therefore, Fellowship is (the bond of) brotherhood.

We know that Fellowship is an ever present condition. Even when we are separated, we are “in fellowship” with other Christians. We might even say that death does not limit fellowship. Fellowship comes from God, not men (*And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:47b*) (*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:9*). Therefore, we neither extend it, create it, nor revoke it. It is not a work but a condition, the condition of having all spiritual things in common. This is why we cannot have fellowship halls or fellowship meals; understanding the meaning of fellowship makes such absurd. As well, we do not have brotherhood associations or organizations, because the only bond between brethren is fellowship, that is, our common walk of faith.

We need to know that there are some who are NOT our brother. Those who have not obeyed the Gospel are NOT our brother. We must discern the lack of fellowship (II Corinthians 6:14-15). As well, some are our brother but are in error (II Thessalonians 3:6-15).

God commands we love the brotherhood (Philippians 1:1-6). Paul demonstrated this love in his communications with Christians. Consider that he said of the Roman Christians (Romans 1:8), the Thessalonian Christians (I Thessalonians 1:2), the Corinthian Christians (I Corinthians 1:4), the Ephesian Christians: (Ephesians 1:16) and the Colossian Christians (Colossians 1:3) that none of them were ever far from his prayers.

So how do we show this affection? Paul showed it by prayer; we can too. As well, we can seek them out when traveling or by attending their meetings. Such actions fulfill this command.

We must love the brotherhood in word and in deed. As well, we must discern who is our brother and communicate that division