

## **The Meaning of Fellowship** **09-09-18AM**

Our faith is based not in artifacts or human leaders but in words. All of our authority is based in the Word of God. We call our God the Word of God (John 1:1). Our Gospel is preached by words, and our salvation is found in words. It is no surprise then that our hope is found often in complex words:

Propitiation – satisfaction of God’s wrath  
Justification – being able to be right before God  
Sanctification – being pure and holy  
Redemption – being bought back  
Regeneration – being born again

As well, some of the great divisions between true Christianity and the many counterfeits that have emerged is in the meaning of words. Not necessarily the complex, but often the very simple:

Love – not an emotion but a mindset of action  
Faith – not blind trust but acting on revelation  
Spiritual – not ethereal but revealed truth  
Church – not a corporation but a support group  
Saint – not a special person but any Christian  
Fellowship – not an action but a condition

### **FELLOWSHIP**

What is Fellowship? According to 1 John 1:1-10 Fellowship is walking in the light as He is in the light; it is the Relationship to Him because we walk in light and the Relationship to others who are in the light. Another way of describing it is as Brotherhood. In Matthew 12:47-50 Jesus described Brotherhood the same way John described Fellowship. It is established by blood (of Christ) and entered by obedience to the will of Christ. Fellowship is created by proclaiming the Gospel; consider that it is not used (it did not exist) before Acts 2:42. Consider again John’s words in 1 John 1 - “that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us”. Finally, Fellowship is the same as citizenship in Ephesians 2:19.

Likewise we can see that Fellowship is NOT an action. One does not “brother” someone else, one does not citizen another. One IS (or IS NOT) a brother or a citizen to another. Fellowship is NOT a matter of our choice; meaning, we do not get to choose with whom we are in fellowship, we ARE or ARE NOT in fellowship with Christ and with others who walk faithfully/unfaithfully. Finally, fellowship is not limited by time and space (Philippians 1:5) or by life and death (Philippians 3:10).

Does It Matter? Is this a mere wrangling over words? It matters in how people apply (mis- apply) that word. Many misuses of fellowship include: Fellowship used to describe eating meals together (“Fellowship halls” – church cafeterias); Fellowship used to describe spending time together (“Fellowshipping with the saints” – social); Fellowship used to describe membership in the local church (“Disfellowshipping” the erring ). So yes, it does matter, since creating a new work of the church matters (1 Cor. 4:6); it matters since doing something unauthorized matters (Rev. 22:18-19); it does since acting without divine permission matters.

We need to pursue (and speak) Fellowship as God Intended. Fellowship began at Pentecost in the Gospel, because this was the introduction of the Gospel. You ONLY have fellowship with those in the light; You ONLY have fellowship with those who obey; You ONLY have fellowship with those in the blood.