

NO FELLOWSHIP? NO PROBLEM!

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<http://theschoolofchrist.org/articles/no-fellowship-no-problem.html>

You will never truly appreciate or benefit from fellowship until you have learned how to live without it.

There already is a fellowship of saints. It is a spiritual fellowship, and it is based on Christ having the preeminence – not the fellowship having preeminence. All this yearning for fellowship and being with others is the result of being hung-over from the religious system. You're trying to fill a void that religion used to fill.

The purpose of solitude in the spiritual desert is to get you to see that Jesus is enough. You're not going to die from lack of fellowship, but if you don't learn that Jesus is enough then spiritually speaking you're dead already. He's the One you need to be focused on – not starting a fellowship, not finding a home group, not making something happen with other people.

And already I can hear the “yeah buts”. “Yeah, but God made us to be social beings. Yeah, but God knows we need encouragement from other believers. Yeah, but the Bible says forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is. Yeah, but we're all supposed to be part of the Body of Christ. Yeah, but there's just something about gathering together with like-minded believers. Yeah, but you just don't understand what it's like.” Yeah, but I do understand – I've been through that part of the desert before, and what I'm trying to tell you is God wishes to know if you love Him or if you love fellowship with others. God wishes to know if you are in love with Him or if you are in love with things about Him. God wishes to know if you seek Him or seek a meeting about Him.

There are times and seasons where He calls you to be alone and apart with Him. I'm not saying it will always be like that, but what if it is? What if He calls you to walk alone with Him for the rest of your life? Is Jesus enough for you?

I asked that question of a group of Christians once: Is Jesus enough for you? Because most Christians do not believe this. They want Jesus, but they also want fellowship with others. Really, do you know what Christians want? Not fellowship with others. That sounds so spiritual. Really what they want is acceptance from other Christians. You go deep down and that's what they want. They want to feel accepted by other Christians. Well, all I can tell you is that you're setting yourself up for a huge disappointment. Eventually there will come a time when you will have to decide between the truth that God has revealed to you and the acceptance of other Christians. Now it hurts when you are not accepted by other Christians. It hurts when other Christians misunderstand you and speak all manner of evil against you falsely when you have spoken the truth to them in love.

But the bottom line is your spiritual life and walk with God does not depend upon the acceptance of other Christians. You might think it does, and it sure makes things easier, but it is not a condition of following Christ – making sure other Christians understand and accept you. The deeper you go into God the more unacceptable you will be to other Christians. Our Lord

and Savior, Jesus Christ is Himself, “Despised and rejected, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Jesus would not be, and is not, accepted by most Christians, and do you know that does not change Him and His relationship with His Father? He is Lord whether you accept Him or not, my friend. And if you are His disciple then He accepts you whether the rest of the Christian population accepts you or not.

What I have found is that whenever I ignore the season God has me in, and I try to create fellowship, or seek fellowship, outside of the time and place appointed by My Father, it always ends in disaster. It creates problems, it becomes a disappointment, or it turns into a distraction from what He wants for my life.

And that is never more true than the period of time when you are fresh out of the religious system. You’ve been under a religious spirit for so many years, and don’t think you can just wake up one day, stop going to church, and be set free from that religious mindset. You think you need fellowship, you think you need meetings, you think you need other people in your life, you think you need all these things, and you are in error. That’s the religious habit talking. It’s just like a drug.

“Oh brother Chip, I’m so lonely, I’ve been going to church every Sunday for twenty years and now we just sit home on Sunday and we feel so empty inside!” Well praise God, if that’s where God has you right now then thank God for it. Stop looking for other people to fill a void that only Christ can fill. You’ve been covering up that void with a lot of religious junk and He’s stripping all that away. He’s trying to build something in you, so let Him do it according to the times and seasons that He has appointed. Don’t rush through that process. Get comfortable with just you and God. My goodness, you don’t even know what it’s like to walk with God and just be hidden in Him because your whole life you’ve been following Him in a crowd, worshipping Him in a crowd, praying to Him in a crowd, learning about Him in a crowd.

Enoch walked with God, and he didn’t have anyone else to fellowship with.

Noah walked with God and he didn’t anyone but his family.

Abraham walked with God and he didn’t have a house church to go to.

Moses spent forty years in the desert and it didn’t hurt him a bit, he came out better than he went in.

Jesus walked with God and every single one of His friends and disciples denied Him and fled when He needed them the most.

You give people too much credit for your spiritual well-being and don’t give God enough credit. I’d rather be alone with God than have a crowd of people without Him.

Now that doesn’t diminish anything the Bible says about the Body of Christ. But you’ve got to learn how to get connected to the Head before you try to get connected to the Body. Body Life is only as good as the Body’s relationship to the Head. The Body has no life in itself apart from the Head. If you read what the Bible says about the Body of Christ, you notice it doesn’t say that we are supposed to seek out our place in the Body or try to insert ourselves into place. It

says He sets us in the Body of Christ according to His will. His will, not ours. You try to set yourself in place and you'll get it wrong.

The Bible does not say "hold fast to the Body" or "hold fast to the members of the Body", it says "hold fast to the Head." The Bible does not say, "Seek ye first the fellowship of others", but "seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things – including fellowship – will be added to you." You learn to do that and the rest will take care of itself, in the time and manner that God sees fit.

Take your hands off that whole issue of fellowship and cast that concern onto the Lord. Go to Him and say, "Lord, here I am in a desert place, it's dry, and it's lonely, and it looks like there's no fellowship. But You are My Rock, My Fortress, My Hiding Place, You lead me and direct my steps. You be My Fellowship. If you see fit to bring me into relationship and fellowship with others, fine; but if not, then I trust that You are more than Enough to meet my spiritual, emotional, and social needs. I can live without fellowship Lord, but I cannot live without You!"

Now folks, I have been in that place so many times I don't even have to pray about it anymore. I've just learned to trust God in this area, and I know He is sufficient. It's settled in me. It's not even a thing I pray about anymore. I want it to become settled in your heart as well. Let the desert do its work.