

LOVE
 Without Hypocrisy
 (in the book of Romans)

25 – Sharing with God's people (7)
 > False perceptions about Koinonia <

A SPECIAL TYPE OF SHARING
AVAILABLE ONLY TO GOD'S PEOPLE

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
Romans 12:13 (NIV)

"KOINONIA" (PART 3)

"Koinonia"

- > A New Testament Greek word. (This is the noun form.)
- > Refers to: fellowship, communion, participation, community, sharing, etc.

DEFINITION:
 "... an association involving **close mutual relations and involvement**—'close association, fellowship.' "

[Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 445). New York: United Bible Societies.]

The unsaved cannot have it

because it's available

only through Jesus Christ.

It begins with
FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD,
 which makes possible ...

FELLOWSHIP
WITH GOD'S FAMILY.

In our generation, people often have

WRONG PERCEPTIONS
about this "FELLOWSHIP"

Especially the aspect of:

SHARING

>> THAT WILL BE OUR FOCUS TODAY. <<


WRONG PERCEPTION #1:
 "Sharing is something that only rich people are to do."



NOT!!

This sharing is not limited to the rich!

- Generosity was a voluntary act by both rich and poor.
 - By the rich - Acts 4:33-35.
 - By the poor – 2 Corinthians 8:1-5



... the Macedonian churches. Out of **the most severe trial**, their overflowing joy and their **extreme poverty** welled up in rich generosity.

For I testify that **they gave** as much as they were able, and **even beyond their ability.**

2 Cor. 8:1b-3a (NIV)

Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints [God's people].

And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.


2 Cor. 8:3b-5 (NIV)

NOTE THIS!

More about those poor Macedonians!

- Giving was their desire. – It wasn't because of coercion from others!
- They had a "koinonia attitude." – They gave themselves to God before giving to people! For them, God's will was #1.

For ALL, it was a way of life!

- The **RICH** continued to do things that benefitted other Christians. (Acts 4:33-35; 9:36; 10:1-2; 16:14-15; etc.).
 - It might be helping others who were in need.
 - It might be providing a place for Christians to meet for worship, or a place where missionaries could lodge, etc.
- The **POOR** continued to do things that benefitted other Christians (as we have already seen).
- Whether rich or poor, slave or free... 

WE ALL WANT TO EXPRESS LOVE TO GOD AND PEOPLE!

WRONG PERCEPTION #2:
 "Sharing means a complete redistribution of wealth."



NOT!!

At various times in history, there have been people who claimed that this verse promoted socialism or even communism! (They always ignore the context: the rest of the book of Acts.)

Now all the believers were together and held all things in **common**. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need.

Acts 2:44-45 (HCSB)

- This does not mean complete financial equality! They did NOT collect everyone's wealth and then divide it equally among the believers!
- This does mean that nobody was "tight-fisted"! When there was a genuine need, they took care of each other.

- The apostles themselves said that it was the individual's decision whether or not to donate money!

While you had the land, it was your own.
After it was sold, **you could have done as you pleased** with the money.

Acts 5:4a (GW)

- Note on Acts 5:1-11** – God put Ananias and Sapphira to death, NOT because they failed to give the church all the money, but because they lied about what they did give.

(Ananias and Sapphira)

SCENE #1

LET'S PRETEND WE'RE DONATING ALL THE MONEY!

GREAT IDEA! PEOPLE WILL BE IMPRESSED!

SCENE #2

GOD WASN'T IMPRESSED!

[AS DEAD AS A DOOR-NAIL]

WHY the COMMANDS about sharing (especially for the rich)?

- Such commands were needed:
 - To **instruct** "new-born" Christians, who didn't yet know what it meant to "follow Jesus."
 - To **warn** any tight-fisted fakes (not actual Christians) who may have crept into the church.
- Even then, the #1 priority wasn't "share with other people," but "put God first"!

Tell those who have the riches of this world not to be arrogant and not to place their confidence in anything as uncertain as riches.

Instead, they should place their confidence in God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

Tell them to do good, to do a lot of good things, to be generous, and to share.

By doing this they store up a treasure for themselves which is a good foundation for the future. In this way they take hold of what life really is.

1 Tim. 6:17-19 (GW)

- #1 = Trust GOD, not riches.
- #2 = Do good for PEOPLE.
- Be future-focused.

WRONG PERCEPTION #3:

"Sharing in needs/suffering means a complete removal of the problem."

NOT!!

This sharing does NOT guarantee:

- Everyone's needs/suffering will come to an end.
- Everyone will attain a life of pleasure and happiness.

★ SHARING in needs/suffering is NOT the same as REMOVING them. ★

[Though the two concepts overlap.]

- **EXAMPLE:** The Philippian church shared with Paul ... but it didn't get him out of prison!

Yet it was good of you to **share** in my troubles.

Philip. 4:14 (NIV)

- **EXAMPLE:** The Galatians couldn't heal Paul, no matter how much they wanted to!

Even though my illness was difficult for you, ... you welcomed me as if I were God's messenger or Christ Jesus himself. ...

It's a fact that if it had been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me.

Galatians 4:14-15 (GW)

This sharing means you'll do what is possible!

- Removing bad situations IS NOT always possible.

- BUT -

- Having the right attitude IS always possible.

Whether or not anything can be done about the problem, we can still have the right attitude!

★ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ★

Romans 12:15 (NIV)

A REMINDER:
God uses trials to accomplish good in us.



And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28 (NIV)

★ Sometimes it's as though we **NEED** the trials! ★

✓ God may use trials to TEACH us!

I know how to live in poverty or prosperity. No matter what the situation, I've learned the secret of how to live when I'm full or when I'm hungry, when I have too much or when I have too little.

I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me.

Philip. 4:12-13 (GW)

★ **Without the trials, we wouldn't learn!**

Paul's needs weren't always satisfied the way we might want!

✓ God may CALL us to be in a special situation, where we can best glorify him!

However, each one must live his life in the situation the Lord assigned when God called him. This is what I command in all the churches. ...

Each person should remain in the life situation in which he was called. ...

Brothers, each person should remain with God in whatever situation he was called.

1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24 (HCSB)

★ **Getting out of the situation would mean removing the opportunity to glorify God!**


✓ You already have what you need most!

My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.

Psalms 73:26 (NLT)

★ **Koinonia is NOT a "comfortable, pain-free, do-as-you-please-and-everything-will-be-OK" life.**

A REMINDER:
 There may be times when the very act of sharing would be wrong, because it would encourage further problems!



★ ✓ EXAMPLE: We must NOT share any time it would enable or encourage a person to sin. ★

{ We've looked at this issue in previous weeks. }

WRONG PERCEPTION #4:
 "When sharing occurs, the 'God focus' isn't that important!"



NOT!!

It should be obvious by now that koinonia is possible only when ALL those involved have a God-focus!

HAVING A GOD-FOCUS is the only way:

★ ✓ The giver can give in a God-honoring way. ★

✓ The receiver can receive in a God-honoring way.

Now suppose this koinonia-fellowship does NOT characterize YOUR experience...

WHY?

POSSIBLE REASONS

↓ MORE

✓ Are you (or others) unsaved? (Then this fellowship is impossible.)

WHY?

✓ Are you (or others) not interested? (It won't happen; there may be salvation issues.)

✓ Are you (or others) neglecting fellowship with God? (Then fellowship will never be what it could have been.)

✓ Are you (or others) focusing mainly on what you can get out of it? (Then fellowship will be shallow and lacking the spiritual depth that God offers.)

Your Mission...

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN KOINONIA:

HOW MIGHT YOU BE ABLE TO PROMOTE KOINONIA-FELLOWSHIP IN YOUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?

★ Remember that it occurs in many ways. It is not limited by the gifts, abilities, or possessions, that we may personally have! ★

Credits (1)

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Your Mission...

"Share with God's people ..."

Romans 12:13a

FELLOWSHIP - with God's people

"Association based upon the sharing of something in common. Believers have fellowship with one another on the basis of their common fellowship with God, their participation in the blessings of the gospel and their common task of mission. True fellowship is demonstrated in concern for, and practical commitment to, one another."¹

KOINONIA-FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD'S PEOPLE: WE CAN HAVE IT ONLY WHEN WE HAVE KOINONIA-FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

Part 3 - Living in fellowship - Love expressed many ways

As we draw close to God, we will draw close to his people. This is what makes koinonia-fellowship possible. This will impact the way we interact with each other.

This interaction is an obligation; but God's people also desire it.

Living in harmony with God's people.

- A description of what this involves - Romans 12:16; Ephesians 4:2-3; Philippians 2:1-5+; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8.
- It will include *all* Christians we have interaction with, *without favoritism* - Acts 10:34; 1 Corinthians 12:25; James 2:1-4.

Building each other up; encouragement.

- Bearing with the weak - Romans 14:1; 15:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Galatians 6:1-2; building them up and encouraging them to grow - Isaiah 35:3-4a; Job 4:3-4; Ephesians 4:29; Acts 18:23.
- Encouragement for all (both them and us) - Romans 1:12; 14:19; 1 Thessalonians. 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25; 13:3; an Old Testament example - 1 Samuel 23:16.
- Putting the needs of others first - Romans 15:2; 1 Corinthians 10:24, 32-33; 13:5; Philippians 2:4-5.

Sharing with the needy among God's people.

- Helping those who have genuine needs - Acts 20:34-35; Ephesians 4:28; Hebrews 13:16; not the lazy - 2 Thes. 3:10.
- This includes God's people living in other localities (as well as those traveling, if they have needs) - Romans 12:13; 15:26; Acts 11:27-30; 1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 13:1-2; 3 John 1:5-8.
- Some examples and instructions related to giving things to others - Matthew 25:35-36; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 1 Timothy 6:17-18; 2 Corinthians 8:13-15; James 1:27; 2:15-16.
- There are times when helping the unsaved is also an option (this is *not* the focus of most Scripture passages that describe sharing) - Deuteronomy 10:18-19; 15:10-11; Luke 3:11.
- Various examples we can learn from - Job 31:16-20; Acts 6:1-4; 9:36; 11:29-30; Romans 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:3-4.

¹ Quoted from: Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.