

The Responsibility of Fellowship *The "One Anothers" of Scripture*

by Marvin Hawbaker

Romans 12:25 says "so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." 1 John 1:7 says that "we have fellowship with one another." Fellowship is partnership and participation in common goals and interests. In the context of the church, the goal is participating with Christ as He builds His church.

The "one anothers" of Scripture define for us what fellowship in the family of the church looks like in practice and what our responsibility is to that fellowship.

There are at least 40 references in the New Testament to "one another" in regard to some responsibility, either positive or negative, that members of a church family have toward each other.

LOVE

Love is the foundation on which all of the other commands are built.

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

HUMILITY

We are to give preference to others, meaning to put others first.

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

We are to avoid "provoking" or irritating one another through pride.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

IMPARTIALITY

We are not to "play favorites" as members of the body of Christ.

II Corinthians 12:25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

UNITY

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

Romans 15:5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

CONSIDERATION

The Apostle's plea here is for consideration in matters of Christian liberty.

Romans 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

ACCEPTANCE

Accept one another in the same way that Christ accepts us.

Romans 15:7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

SERVICE

We serve God in this world by serving others through the church.

Galatians 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

I Peter 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

PURE SPEECH

Galatians 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

James 4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

PATIENCE

We are to bear with one another, or in other words, put up with one another.

Ephesians 4:2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

James 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

The word "grumble" in James 5:9 means "to sigh or murmur". It has the idea of becoming exasperated or losing patience.

FORGIVENESS

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

KINDNESS

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

SUBMISSION

Ephesians 5:21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

I Peter 5:5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

TRUTHFULNESS

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

COMFORT

I Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

I Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

EXHORTATION

Exhortation has the idea of getting beside someone and inviting them or encouraging them to do what is right.

Hebrews 3:13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

We are to "stir up" others, meaning to incite or encourage them to good.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

We are to "admonish" others, meaning to put them in mind of something, caution them or reprove them gently.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Romans 15:14 Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

HOSPITALITY: to be fond of guests.

I Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

PRAYER

James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

HONESTY

James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

These commands may seem idealistic, but they are realistic in the power of the Holy Spirit. *"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."* (Galatians 5:16). Let's help "one another" make fellowship at Calvary all that God intends it to be.

All references are from the NKJV

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