

5[I thank my God] for your fellowship (your sympathetic cooperation and contributions and partnership) in advancing the good news (the Gospel) from the first day [you heard it] until now. 7It is right and appropriate for me to have this confidence and feel this way about you all, because you have me in your heart and I hold you in my heart as partakers and sharers, one and all with me, of grace (God's unmerited favor and spiritual blessing). [This is true] both when I am shut up in prison and when I am out in the defense and confirmation of the good news (the Gospel).

**Definition** – sharing, unity, close association, partnership, participation, communion, contributory help, brotherhood

1. **Sharing** – what is mine is yours – partaker (God's unmerited favor and spiritual blessing)
  - a. **He shared is resurrection and position with us... Ephesians 2:4-7** - 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
  - b. **The Church shared all things: Acts 2:44-45** - 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.
2. **Participation** – worked together -
  - a. **My gift is for your edification – I Peter 4:9-10** - 9Practice hospitality to one another (those of the household of faith). [Be hospitable, be a lover of strangers, with brotherly affection for the unknown guests, the foreigners, the poor, and all others who come your way who are of Christ's body.] And [in each instance] do it ungrudgingly (cordially and graciously, without complaining but as representing Him). 10As each of you has received a gift (a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another as [befits] good trustees of God's many-sided grace [faithful stewards of the [f]extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians by unmerited favor].
  - b. **Your battle is my battle – II Samuel 21:16-17** - 16Ishbi-benob, who was of the sons of the giants, the weight of whose spear was 300 shekels of bronze, was girded with a new sword, and thought to kill David. 17But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's aid, and smote and killed the Philistine. Then David's men charged him, You shall no more go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel.
3. **Close Association** – meet together –
  - a. **Will not forsake meeting – Hebrews 10:25** - 25Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.
  - b. **Power in corporate assembly – Acts 2:42** - 42And they steadfastly persevered, devoting themselves constantly to the instruction and fellowship of the apostles, to the breaking of bread [including the Lord's Supper] and prayers.
  - c. **Have a company to run to – Acts 4:23 & 31** - 23After they were permitted to go, [the apostles] returned to their own [company] and told all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 31And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak the Word of God with freedom and boldness and courage.
4. **Contributory Help** – the fellowship has my finances –
  - a. **The place of treasure reveals heart - Luke 12:34** - For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
  - b. **Church has a job to care for those in fellowship – Acts 4:32** - 32Now the company of believers was of one heart and soul, and not one of them claimed that anything which he possessed was [exclusively] his own, but everything they had was in common and for the use of all.
  - c. **Grace to excel in – II Corinthians 8:6-9** - 6So much so that we have urged Titus that as he began it, he should also complete this beneficent and gracious contribution among you [the church at Corinth]. 7Now as you abound and excel and are at the front in everything--in faith, in expressing yourselves, in knowledge, in all zeal, and in your love for us--[see to it that you come to the front now and] abound and excel in this gracious work [of

almsgiving] also. 8I give this not as an order [to dictate to you], but to prove, by [pointing out] the zeal of others, the sincerity of your [own] love also. 9For you are becoming progressively acquainted with and recognizing more strongly and clearly the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (His kindness, His gracious generosity, His undeserved favor and spiritual blessing), [in] that though He was [so very] rich, yet for your sakes He became [so very] poor, in order that by His poverty you might become enriched (abundantly supplied).

5. **Partnership** – your vision is my vision

- a. **Philippians 2:2** - Fill up and complete my joy by living in harmony and being of the same mind and one in purpose, having the same love, being in full accord and of one harmonious mind and intention.

**Characteristics** – Looking at our fellowship with God, we see how to fellowship with each other:

**John 13:35** - By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves].

**Ephesians 5:1-2** - 1THEREFORE BE imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example], as well-beloved children [imitate their father]. 2And walk in love, [esteeming and delighting in one another] as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a [a]slain offering and sacrifice to God [for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance.

1. **Relationship – Not just fellow servants, adopted sons - John 1:12-13** - 12But to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the authority (power, privilege, right) to become the children of God, that is, to those who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) His name--13Who owe their birth neither to [a]bloods nor to the will of the flesh [that of physical impulse] nor to the will of man [that of a natural father], but to God. [They are born of God!]
2. **Character – Others watch you and judge the fellowship – Christianity is judged less by our Christ and more by our Christians**
  - a. **I Peter 1:15** - 15But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living.
  - b. **I John 1:5-10** - 5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
  - c. Ambassadors
3. **Authority – Authority is based on submission**
  - a. **Romans 8:16** - 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.
  - b. **Ephesians 2:6** - 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

**Public Profession – Outward sign of an inward truth... corresponding action to a spiritual truth**

1. **Baptism, Lords Supper, Tithes & Offerings, Foot-washing, Laying on of hands**
2. **Public Profession brings Spiritual Acknowledgement – Matthew 10:32-33** - 32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

**Conclusion:**

1. **Something Powerful about agreement - Matthew 18:19** - “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.
2. **God honors unity and fellowship** – commanded blessing,
3. **I Corinthians 11** - 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat;[b] this is My body which is broken[c] for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. Examine Yourself 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood[d] of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner[e] eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s[f] body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.