

Sunday School Notes

Sunday, November 6, 2011

A Few Marks of Distinctively Christian Fellowship

The Necessity of Fellowship

1. It is **not good** for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18).
 - A. We were created for relationship; this is part of being made in the image of a relational God.
 - B. Just as we have a “God-shaped void” in our hearts that nothing else can fill, we also have a “friend-shaped void” in our hearts that nothing else can fill.
 - C. See 1 Cor. 12:12-26
2. “‘Yes’ to Jesus, ‘No’ to the church!”
 - A. There is a lot of misunderstanding in our culture and in our churches about what it means to be “the people of God.”
 - B. All throughout Scripture, God “calls people out” and places them into community (a) with him and (b) with each other.

A Glimpse of Christian Fellowship

1. Acts 2:42
 - A. The disciples **devoted** themselves to fellowship (*koinonia*).
 - B. Biblical fellowship is deep spiritual union with others based on a **shared** union with God enacted by Christ’s work and the Spirit’s power.
 - C. Fellowship comes to us a gift; we can either resist it or **devote ourselves** to it, we cannot create it (cf. Eph. 4:3: Paul admonished believers to “maintain” the unity that’s theirs on account of their common faith).
 - D. Fellowship happens in churches and in homes.
2. Acts 20:36-21:14

A. This is a travel log of the disciples' evangelistic travels, an account of their journey.

B. What permeates this passage is a sense of **fellowship**.

C. There was a lot of sharing taking place:

i. The disciples shared their **feelings** (20:36-38).

ii. The disciples shared their **things** (21:4, elsewhere).

iii. The disciples shared their **faith** (20:36; 21:5, 14).

iv. The disciples shared their **lives** (21:4, 9ff).

D. Implications for us?

3. Summary

A. The gospel is about fellowship: When we're brought into fellowship with God, we're brought into fellowship with his people.

B. We cannot say "'Yes' to Jesus and 'No' to the church!"

C. Friendships became platforms on which the gospel is put on display.

i. An **incarnational** demonstration of the gospel.

ii. Fellowship is **gospel-shaped**.

Questions for Discussion and Application

1. Brainstorm your immediate responses to the word "fellowship." How do your responses compare to the marks of Christian fellowship found in this passage.

2. Making time for fellowship can be difficult. What stands in your way of fellowship with other believers? Why do you think this usually happens?

3. Discuss your thoughts regarding the following statement: "We cannot be Christians alone."

4. How do relationships create opportunities to display the gospel? How have you experienced this in your own life?

5. Do you have someone you consider to be a spiritual friend? If not, what's standing in your way? If so, what can you do to better "spur one another on toward faith and good works?"