

FELLOWSHIP III

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person -- such a man is an idolater -- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.” (Ephesians 5:1-7)

God grace that brings salvation had appeared to all men that teach us to say no to ungodliness and worldly desires. God sent His Son the Lord Jesus Christ to save us from sin and death. Jesus Christ suffered and died on the cross for our sins. He was buried but rose from the dead on the third day to give eternal life to those who believe in Him and follow His steps in their lives. To live a good quality with the Lord Jesus Christ is to live in holiness and to keep our fellowship with the saints, the holy people of God. That calls us to clean our fellowship from sexual immorality, impurity, corruption and other kinds of sins so that we would not suffer the consequences of these sins.

There are times we have to keep the fellowship in order to impart the love of Jesus to the new believers and in order to help them in their growth and to be build up in the knowledge of Christ and His Word. But there are times where the fellowship has to be broken because keeping fellowship with certain people who call themselves brothers but they keep on sinning and living in sin will bring on us the same punishment and the wrath that the Lord will bring on them. The Bible tells us, *“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.” (Proverbs 13:20)* If we walk with those who fear the Lord we will grow with them as wise. But if we keep company with the fool who live in sin we will suffer the same of what they will suffer of their sins. Therefore, we will study below which time the fellowship should be discontinued.

1. “But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.” (1 Corinthians 5:11) The Word of God it teaches us here not to associate with anyone who call or consider himself a Christian brother or sister and he or she still live in darkness. The following categories of those who call themselves believers should stay outside the church until they repent, turn from their sins and follow Christ:-

A. Sexually immoral: We cannot keep inside the church those who still doing sex outside the marriage life, or have sexual perversion and homosexuality.

B. Greedy: Church fellowship is not a place of business or getting customers. We don't encourage in our fellowship such kind of attitude. Also our people should love God more than money. Greediness is like idol worship.

C. An idolater: We cannot keep our fellowship with those who come with us but they keep idols with them and continue to adorn and worship them beside Jesus.

D. A Slanderer: A person who continually tells lies and moves from person to person to gossip and tell fabricated stories; we should break the fellowship with that person.

E. A Drunkard: Those who keep drinking we cannot consider them in Christ Jesus our Lord, and if they would not respond to the instruction, fellowship with them needs to be broken.

F. A Swindler: A person who tries to cheat and plough people we cannot keep him in our church. Such kind of people are wolves among sheep, if we keep them inside the church they will harm the true believers, and will promote more the work of the devil.

2. “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.” (Mathew 18:15-17) A person who sins against you or who had committed a sin and you are the one who discover it, then it is you who need to go to him alone and speak to him privately about what he had done wrong. If he accepts his sin and repent then you have won over your brother. But if he is not willing then bring one or two with you, then if he is not willing to listen and repent then report that to the church and if he would not listen to the church then consider him as non-believers.

3. “If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.” (2 Thessalonians 3:14) That was part of the apostle Paul letter to the church in Thessalonica. He gave them instruction about different subjects like not to be idle, live in holiness, the second coming of Christ, and other teachings of the Lord Jesus. Paul instructed the church that those who refuse to obey those instructions; they should not associate with them. What we can say for us as a church today is this: If someone is not willing to obey and follow the teaching of the church that comes from the bible he should not be part of our fellowship.

My Dear and Beloved: The Word of God tells us the following, *“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked man from among you.” (1 Corinthians 5:12-13)*

We need to keep our fellowship clean, without sin and without blemish. The church is the household of God and should be kept vibrant, and this is your responsibility to keep as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins. Lord I commit myself not to associate with people who call themselves brothers but they are evil doers. Lord I commit myself to keep our church fellowship clean and healthy and to expel the wicked who are among us so that your name would be glorified among the nations. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*