David O. Cofield
CrossRoads Baptist Church
January 22, 2012 10:15 a.m.

"The Church Is Built on Fellowship"

Last Sunday we talked about relationships and how the church is built on relationships. Jesus came to save us. This salvation is personal, but not private.

The relationship with Jesus calls us into relationship with other believers. A church is an "assembly of called out ones." An assembly means there is more than one present and we are relating to them.

But how do we related to them? The Bible goes to get detail to instruct us in how we are to related to one another - just as much as he reveals the way of salvation.

Our relationships with one another are unlike anything else we experience in our world. I am not referring to a relationship with a boss, coach, spouse, child,government, or a friend. The relationship of believers has a unique word to describe it:

Koinonia - practical expression of God's love toward His people. "Agape love in action. It is how we experience the fullness of God's love for His people and in His people. In a real sense koinonia is the essence of God's great salvation."

I want to share a list of one words that help our minds wrap around this thought of koinonia:

1. Family

We are family.

* We are born of the same earthly father - Adam and in sin.
* We are spiritually born of the same father - God.
* We have the same brother - Jesus Christ. He is all of our saviour.
* We have the same blood of our Father.
* We have the same DNA.

Biological families must interact and spend time together, as must our spiritual family.

The concept of us as a family is very biblical. To follow Christ may mean you forsake your earthly family, but you will always have a spiritual family.

And because of the newness of our DNA and the depth of our spiritual conversion, our spiritual family may be closer to us than our earthly family.

There is a love and a spirit involved that is deeper and purer simply because unless you have been born again, we may be physically related but we are not spiritually related and won't spend eternity together.

When the family gathers, the Father is present. Matthew 18:20 assures us that when two-or-three gather in my name, I am in the midst. A father's heart is to be with his family; we get that from God.

3 John 4 "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Henry Blackaby says, "There are things God does in, for, and through His family that He does nowhere else. ...We receive

strength, encouragement, and much needed fellowship. We grow in wisdom and maturity. We find security in the family's watch care over our life."

2. Love

John 14: 6-7 "No ones comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known my Father also..." God loved so much that He sent His Son to show us who He truly is and how we can know Him.

God is not a distant God but instead one who came close. He is real and personal and active.

Koinonia is "agape love in action."

Love is a verb - full of action.

I John 3:16 "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

I John 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brethren abides in death."

I John 4:21 "And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

Anyone who calls Christ Lord is now our brother or sister, and God expects us to treat him as our family. He expects us to love each other just as much as He loves them.

We love each member and we are loved by each member. If you gossip about someone, you don't have a tongue problem - you have a love issue. "Love covers a multitude of sins."

The early church loved one another so much they could not get enough fellowship. They loved to be together and were "daily" together.

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

Read from Blackaby's "The God-Centered Church" page 207

3. Partnership

Partnership is the bonding of two or more lives for a common purpose. A financial partnership is business persons going in with all they have for a common purpose.

Luke 5:10 "and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon..." partners as fishermen.

Philippians 1: 5 "for our fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"

Here Paul tells them that they shared in his suffering, poverty and message. They were "partners."

It is in everyone's best interest that we love one another and share in koinonia.

4. **Sharing**

To share is the release of everything there is in you to the one with whom you are sharing.

I Peter 4:13 “but rejoice to the extent that you partakers of Christ’s suffering...”

If there is a need in the church family, then it is all of our need. If there is a sadness, it is all of our sadness.

Romans 12: 15 “Rejoice with those rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

They even cared for one another’s physical needs.

Acts 2: 43-45

5. Stewardship

The concept of stewardship is you have been entrusted with a relationship to God and now you are a good steward of all that God has brought to you. You are taking all the resources of God and letting these flow through you to the rest of the people of God.

The forgiveness God has granted in your life you steward it by sharing it with others.

The love God has granted in your life you steward it by loving others.

Just was Christ prays for us, we pray for others.

Just as Christ cares for us, we care for others.

The selflessness we have experienced with Christ we share with others by caring more for them than ourselves.

II Cor. 6: 1 "Don't receive God's grace in vain."

6. Test

I John 1:7 "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."

Evidence that we truly have fellowship with God is demonstrated by our fellowship with one another.

7. Witness

I John 1: 2-3

True koinonia, in its fullest expression, can only be found in one place - the local church. Nowhere else is God's love displayed and experienced more deeply than in the midst of His people as they gather together.

You shall know them by their love.

We have never seen people love one another and care for one another like this. That should be the testimony of every church.

"Evangelism is a by-product of a people in love with their Lord." Blackaby, page 23

"The key to touching our world is for the people of God to walk in a right relationship with Him and one another." Blackaby, page 23.

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God's great salvation lived out among His people is the most powerful force in the world. But when we quarrel and become selfish, we do the kingdom much harm.