

# The Fellowship of the Body of Christ

## II JOHN

### The Doctrine of Christ

**Verse 1:** *“The elect lady and her children”*

This is a typological or poetic expression used by John to identify a church. Verse 5 establishes this point, and shows that a church, and not an individual lady, is meant.

**Verses 1 & 2:** *“...whom I love in the truth; and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth; because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever”*.

John is here saying that he, and all who know the truth, will love a church that is living in the truth. The truth that abides in us causes us to have dignity, value and appeal as a congregation.

**Verse 3:** *“Grace, mercy and peace will be with you from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ”*.

The lifestyle of love that is demonstrated among us as we fellowship with the Godhead and with one another, is **the very essence of love and truth**.

We are able, therefore, to commit ourselves to one another in the body of Christ in trust and love, and participate in this lifestyle, for the Lord has guaranteed that the truth will be with us, and in us, forever.

The quality of living experienced by those who are committed to living in this manner will be supernatural and abundant.

**Verse 4:** John is rejoicing that some of the members of the church are living in obedience to the commandment of the Father by living in the truth in this manner.

**Verse 5, 6, 9:** *“The new commandment is the old commandment that we had from the beginning that we love one another. (John 13:34).*

To be committed in sincere Christian relationship within the Body of Christ is to abide in the doctrine of Christ.

Those who live in this manner have both the Father and the Son. Those who do not live in this manner do not have God, for they are not abiding in the **doctrine of Christ**.

**Verse 10:** *“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor greet him”*. When anyone comes to us with teachings or attitudes that contradict this fundamental understanding, or in its place as a foundation, have no other priorities and ways of living, we are under no Christian obligation to receive them. Rather, we are admonished to avoid them because of the troubling and leavening effect that they may have on our lives.

We are called by God into the fellowship (“koinonia”) of His Son.<sup>1</sup> The fellowship of Jesus Christ is found in the body of Christ.<sup>2</sup> This is demonstrated in a communion, or fellowship together as Christians, flowing from our joint participation in the Spirit,<sup>3</sup> in the blood of Christ,<sup>4</sup> and in the body of Christ.

Fellowship with the Father and Son is maintained as we walk together in relationship. Our commitment to the fellowship of the body allows the blood to be efficacious for our deliverance *“from all sin”* (I John 1:1-7). This relationship is defined as a participation in *“the apostles’ teaching and fellowship”* demonstrated in *“the breaking of bread and prayers”* (Acts 2:42, I Cor 10:16).

Our being members of the body of Christ is the basis of our relationship, and the mandate

<sup>1</sup> I Cor 1:9

<sup>2</sup> I Cor 12:12

<sup>3</sup> Phil 2:1, II Cor 13:14

<sup>4</sup> I Cor 10:16

of the presbytery is conditional upon a commitment to this basis and a maintaining of the “koinonia” of the body in love and truth.

The “*first love*” basis that the Ephesian elders were admonished to return to<sup>5</sup> is truly a heavenly places dimension or lifestyle and is the foundational reality that defines and moderates our relationships and loyalties.

Some individuals, families, or groups, minister from the basis of being friends and colleagues around the acceptance of an individual’s fatherhood, ministry, revelation, or doctrine.

This base is not compatible with a true presbytery base of the body of Christ. A multiple ministry functioning on this basis is not a true presbytery. That is why relating together on the basis of individual ministry definition is a danger to presbytery relatedness.

The “friends, family or ministry base” has become a stronghold that wars against the unity of the body of Christ. A different basis is often manifest when a submission to presbytery in matters that need adjustment is called for.

The “fatherhood base” will claim priority in authority based on patriarchal considerations. The “ministry base” will claim personal authority on the ground of hearing from God apart from, and over against the presbytery. These varying ministry approaches need to be laid down if there is to be a return to “first love” in the leadership of the church.

## I JOHN 1

### **The Apostle’s fellowship (koinonia) - the proclamation and manifestation of the word of life**

**Verse 1:** “*The word of life*” defined - it was “*from the beginning*” and is “*eternal*”.

<sup>5</sup> Rev 2:24

It was revealed to man and was manifest in the flesh in the Lord Jesus Christ and in us as members of the body of Christ. The manifestation of the word in the flesh of man is not just some transient step in the eternal purpose of God, rather it is the whole purpose of God for history to which every other activity is subservient.

As members of the body of Christ we have a participation and fellowship (koinonia) in the “*word of life*”. “*We (together) have heard*” and understood His message, “*we have seen*” and appreciated his beauty and activity, “*we have looked upon*” with a spiritual motivation and discernment to “*handle with our hands*” and thus participate in the ministry of “*the word of life*”.

**Verse 2:** “: “*The life was manifested in Christ*”.

As a result of His life, death and resurrection Christ is now ascended and sits at the right hand of the Father as the immortal head of the body. The word of life is now manifested on earth through the church.

The word of life is now “*the life manifested*” in the body. For, “*we have seen and bear witness and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifest to us*”.

**Verse 3:** “*That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you may have fellowship with us*”.

The message proclaimed is the true word to bring those who will hear and believe into relationship with those that the Father and Son have sent to represent Them on earth.

The right to proclaim is conditional upon being in the fellowship (koinonia) of the Father and Son.

The reason for proclaiming is to bring those who believe into fellowship with the Godhead and the members of the body of Christ.

The pattern of relationship for man on earth is the same in Christ as the pattern of

relationship that the Godhead has in Heaven. This pattern of relationship is a fellowship of life.

This fellowship of life that God has band lives in is the same fellowship of life that is to be manifest in the body of Christ.

**Verse 4:** *“These things we write to you that your joy may be full”.*

When true values are manifest, the result is always joy and happiness. A thing only has value if it results in happiness. This is why the scriptures show that happiness is a result of virtue. Virtuous living is a key element to the fellowship of the body.

**Verse 5 & 6:** *“This is the message we have heard ... and declare to you:*

*God is light  
And in Him is no darkness at all”.*

The body is the place where perfection has already been made manifest i.e. in Christ the man.

Because the body is Christ (Chapter 5:20) and the perfect light is already shining in the body of Christ, then the body is the context wherein the perfecting processes operate for those who will walk in fellowship and light.

To not walk in fellowship is a failure to practice the truth. This is what it means to walk in darkness. To not walk in fellowship in the body and yet claim to have fellowship with God is to proclaim a lie and be self-deceived.

**Verse 7 & 8:** *“But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have:*

*fellowship with one another  
and the blood cleanses us from all sin”.*

These verses declare that the fellowship of life is in the body.

It is possible to be in the body and only minimally participate in the fellowship (koinonia) of its life - the result of this is that the perfecting process is not operating in us

and because of this the blood is unable to cleanse us from all sin.

The message that we need to hear and believe is the proposition put to us by John *“if we walk in the light, as He is in the light”* we will have the fellowship of life and the blood will cleanse and perfect from all sin.

The attitude which says “I have no sin” denies my brother’s responsibility within the koinonia to minister to my failures and sin. This attitude is resistant and untouchable about personal failure.

To say *“I have no sin”* is to deny the need for the perfecting process. This attitude damages the koinonia of the body and for the the individual who walks in the body with this attitude, the process of deception has begun.

*“We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”.* We lead ourselves astray because we deny the perfecting process in the church, we therefore become responsible for our own deception.

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