GFF- The Benefits of Fellowship with the Body of Christ

1. Introduction- Last week we explored what we as believers have through our Fellowship with God. We expressed that: **We are Partners in His Mission, We** **Participate (Share) in the Benefits of His Work, and We Commune with His Spirit.**

Fellowship with the Body of Christ is something that has been vital since the birth of the Church. However, in the times we live today the necessity of this has been questioned by some believers who feel as though watching church online is as good as being there in person. The reality is, however when you talk to people both believers and unbelievers, there is a growing number of people that suffer from loneliness. This divide and conquer strategy is one that our enemy has used for centuries to hinder the growth of the Body of Christ. With the advent of the Information Age, our society has become more connected while become more distant than it has ever been. How many times have you seen a group of people out to eat together, but everyone is on their phone. Our society has developed the ability to “Be Everywhere and Nowhere at the same time”. This “false” sense of connection has left many people disillusioned and clueless about how to develop real relationship. Therefore, in response it will benefit us to get back to fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We see this clearly in the early church….

*Acts 2:42-47 ESV*

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

Today we want to explore four benefits of fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

1. Encouragement in times of need
2. Safety from false teaching
3. Ability to share our gifts with our family (our brethren in the Faith)
4. Fellowship Among the Brethren Gives Stronger Witness to the World

Encouragement in times of need

*Hebrews 10:23-25 ESV*

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. [24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Encouragement is vital because it helps us to stay focused on motivated on what is important when the world, the flesh, and the devil are all working in conjunction to rob from you. The scripture declares that the joy of the Lord is our strength, therefore anything that the enemy can do to attack our joy he will attempt to do.

Discouragement grows in isolation. We see this in the life of Elijah after he saw a miraculous move of God where he killed 450 prophets of Baal and prayed for rain, after all this, he fell prey to the threatening words of Jezebel which discouraged him to the point of despair, believing that he was the only one left serving God. When we are isolated the opportunity for excessive introspection and negative self-talk is amplified.

Safety from False Teaching and Destructive Mindsets

**This benefit is one that we definitely need today. The scriptures make it abundantly clear that there is safety inside a local community of believers committed to loving one another. The need for this in our day is greater than it has ever been due to the overabundance of information available to others.**

*Psalm 1:1-3 NKJV*

*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; [2] But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. [3] He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

*2 Timothy 4:2-4 ESV*

*preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. [3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*

*Proverbs 11:14 KJV*

*Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

*Proverbs 24:6 KJV*

*For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

*Proverbs 15:22 ESV*

*Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.*

*Jeremiah 23:4 KJV*

*And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.*

Ability to share our gifts with our family (our brethren in the Faith)

A third benefit of fellowship with a local body of believers is that each person has an opportunity to share their fruit and gifts with other members of the Body. Every one of us has a unique purpose within a local body of believers and as a member of the Body of Christ as a whole. Whenever a member of the Body of Christ is separated from a local assembly, the Body is lacking something special.

*Romans 12:4-8 NKJV*

*For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, [5] so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. [6] Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; [7] or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; [8] he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

Fellowship Among the Brethren Gives Stronger Witness to the World

*John 13:34-35 NKJV*

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. [35] By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

Mankind’s greatest need is love and the only type of love that can fulfill that God sized void that is in man’s soul is God’s perfect agape love. When we as believers can express genuine love toward one another within the context of Christian community then we are setting ourselves apart from the . The people of this world are dying of loneliness and thirst for true relationship. We have an awesome opportunity to show a lost world that God is ready to give them restoration and an eternal hope, if all they would do is receive it. The way a local Body of believers loves on one another is a Billboard to the world advertising God’s Goodness.