



DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Christian fellowship
is **forming close relationships**
with **other believers**

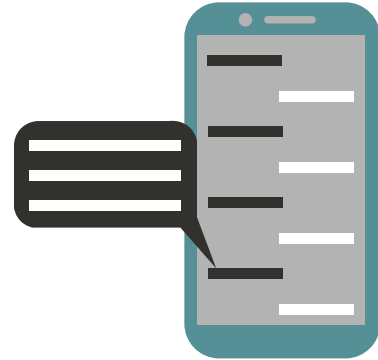
Why is Christian Fellowship Important?

1



We can encourage one another for good works and spiritual maturity

2



It creates a system of accountability

3



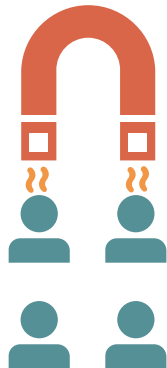
We can comfort one another in times of trouble

4



We can display our love for one another

5



Our unity will appeal to unbelievers

6



We can worship God together



CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE INCLUSIVE

Christians have something in common: we are all members of the same spiritual family (Ephesians 1:5). This overcomes our differences in race, gender, political views, age, occupation, hobbies, marital status, or any other difference we have with someone.

Race

Some churchgoers look down on people who are of a different race. Many congregations are composed of only 1 race. We need to be accepting of all people regardless of race (Revelation 15:4).

Politics

Some churchgoers look down on people who hold a different political view. We should not allow non-spiritual political issues to cause division within the Church.

Age

Some churchgoers look down on people because of their age. Paul tells Timothy not to allow people to look down on him because of his young age (this could apply to those of old age as well) (1 Timothy 4:12).

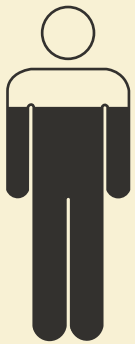
Marital Status

Some churchgoers look down on members that are not married. This is ironic since Paul recommends remaining single so we will not be distracted from our relationship with God (1 Corinthians 7:7-8).

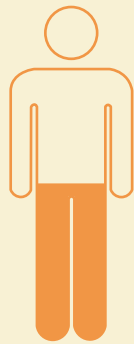
We need to celebrate our differences because our diversity as believers shows that God has saved people from all different backgrounds and therefore He does not show favoritism.

We need to celebrate our differences because our diversity as believers allows us to reach anyone with the gospel.¹ Our differences make us more effective in reaching the lost.

Below is the breakdown by percentage of various groups of people who strongly agree that Christians accept and love people unconditionally, regardless of how people look or what they do.²



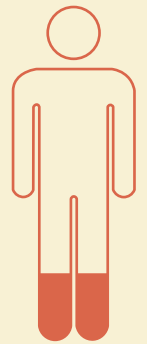
Pastors



"Born-Again" Christians



Christian Churchgoers



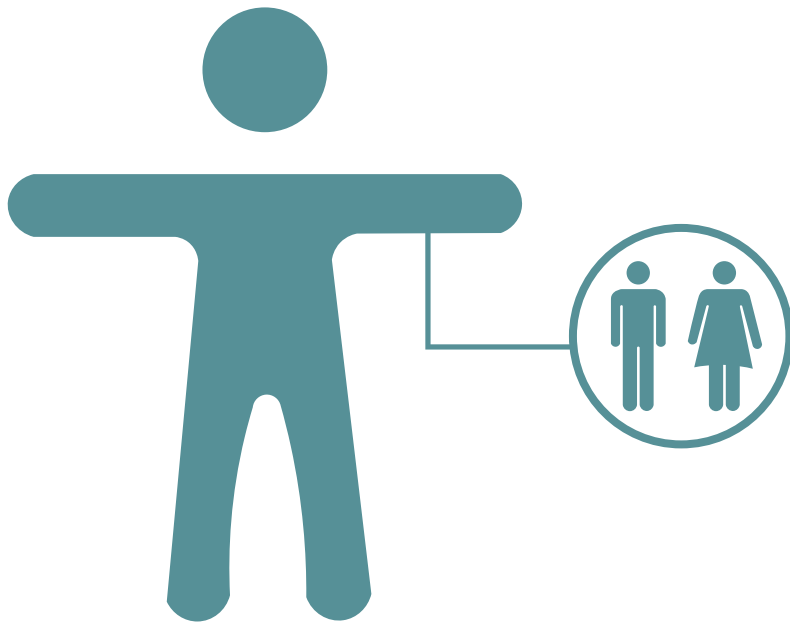
Outsiders (non-churchgoers)





CHRISTIANS NEED TO FUNCTION AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Church is described as the Body of Christ throughout the New Testament (Romans 12:5; Hebrews 13:3; Ephesians 4:12, 5:23; 1 Corinthians 10:17, 12:27; Colossians 1:24).



The Body of Christ is comprised of every believer

The Body of Christ symbolizes...

(1) the Church's diversity

Just as a body is composed of various parts with different functions, the Church is composed of various people with different gifts (1 Corinthians 12). Each person has a spiritual gift they bring to the body (see chapter 11). It does not matter what your gift is, everyone is needed for the body to function properly.

(2) the Church's unity

While the Church is diverse and made up of different parts, we all form 1 body. Members of the Body of Christ also possess various gifts and serve different functions but we all share 1 primary purpose: to glorify God.

(3) the Church's unique relationship with Jesus

To use the illustration that we are Christ's body shows how close our relationship with Jesus truly is. There is no way to describe a closer relationship than stating that we are of the same body.



CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE UNITED

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42-47

Spiritual Provision

As the early church gathered together, they were blessed with Biblical teaching, fellowship with like-minded believers, participation in the Lord’s Supper, and communal prayer.

Physical Provision

The believers shared their possessions with each other depending on each person’s needs. This selfless mentality allowed the early church to provide for one another’s needs.

Unity within the Church leads to...

They also gathered every day to fellowship. They gathered in homes to worship God and share meals with one another. They were even encouraged to disciple one another (2 Timothy 2:2).

Effective Discipleship

As the believers were united together in all things, people began to join them in their worship of Jesus. Jesus promised His followers that if we are united together, the world will recognize that we are truly from God (John 17:23).

Effective Evangelism



CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE A PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH

Why Do Christians Need to Be a Part of a Local Church?

The early church set the example of faithful church attendance and we are told not to give up meeting together (Hebrews 10:25). Being involved with a local body of believers allows for fellowship to occur. We can form relationships with other believers through a local church and reap the benefits of fellowship mentioned earlier through these relationships.

Where Should Christians Gather for Church Services?

Church services could take place in church buildings as many of us are used to or could take place in homes as many believers (including the early church) are familiar with. The priority should not be where we gather, but that we gather with fellow believers.



Benefits to Church Buildings and House Churches



- More space for growth
- Many service opportunities
- Many resources at disposal
- Diverse programs to cater to any individual's needs
- Large network of believers
- Church leaders are "professionals"
- Larger budget
- Easy to invite unchurched friends
- Building available for various events
- Easier to network with ministries
- Opportunities for close relationships (small groups)

- Easy to start
- Inexpensive to operate
- Simple to multiply / expand
- Less of a consumer mentality (more focus on worshipping God)
- More intimate among members
- Easier to implement culture of discipleship
- Easier to train and develop leaders
- Closer connection among members
- Nobody is lost in the crowd
- Ministry is replicable