

25 Ecclesial life - Fellowship

Acts 2:42-47 is a vivid description of the fellowship that was enjoyed by the thousands of members of the early church. Briefly, what do you think fellowship meant to them, and how did it show itself?

In Galatians 2:9 Paul records how James, Peter and John 'gave the right hand of fellowship' to him and to Barnabas.



Practical sharing and friendship

Look at Romans 15:26-27. What form did their fellowship take? How should members of an ecclesia show this fellowship today?

A common faith

The members of the early church all believed the same things; Philemon 1:5-7 is just one example. How can the members of an ecclesia grow this aspect of fellowship?

Different sorts of people

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 compares an ecclesia to the parts of a human body. Does this mean that people might disagree? Is that good or bad?

Fellowship with the Lord Jesus and with God

Look at 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 1 John 1:3,6. How can we develop this fellowship?

Working together

It's important that although we may have different ideas we should work together and not be divisive. Look at Ephesians 4:12-13 and Titus 3:10.

How important is it?

What does Peter say in 1 Peter 3:8-9? And John in 1 John 2:9-11?

An ecclesia means an 'assembly of people who are called to meet'. In ancient Greece an ecclesia was a political assembly of citizens, but the apostles used the word to mean believers who were called to leave the world and to assemble together. Here is the Ekklesiasterion at Paestum in Italy.



Dealing with problems

The new testament has many situations where the apostles gave instructions in situations where there were problems - for example, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Corinthians 16:15-16, Acts 20:30-31. It is important that in any ecclesia there should be those in a position to give positive scriptural guidance where it is needed.

Sometimes there were problems where action had to be taken. Look at the examples below, and summarise what was the problem being dealt with, what action was taken, and what Paul was hoping to achieve.

	Problem	Action	Reason
1 Timothy 5:20			
Titus 1:10-14			
2 Thessalonians 3:11-15			
Romans 16:17-18			
1 Corinthians 5:5-7, 11-13			
1 Timothy 1:19,20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18			