

Fellowship in the Gospel

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- [0 : 0 0] Let us resume our public worship of God by singing from Psalm 122. Psalm 122.
- We are going to sing the whole psalm. I joy it went to the house of God, go up they said to me. Jerusalem within thy gates our feet shall standing be.
- Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together. And to that place the tribes go up, the tribes of God go thither.
- To Israel's testimony there to God's name thanks to pay. For thrones of judgment even the thrones of David's house there stay. Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity.
- Let them that love thee and thy peace have still prosperity. Therefore I wish that peace may still within thy walls remain. And ever may thy palaces prosperity retain.
- [1 : 0 6] Now for my friends and brethren's sakes, peace be in thee I'll say. And for the house of God, O Lord, I'll seek thy good all way.
- Psalm 122. Psalm 122. The whole psalm to God's praise. I joyed went to the house of God, go up they said to me. I joyed went to the house of God, go up they said to me.
- Jerusalem, I joyed went to the house of God, go up they said to me. Jerusalem, I joyed went to the house of God, go up they said to me. Jerusalem, I joyed went to the house of God, go up they said to me.
- Jerusalem, I joyed gone to the house of God, go up they said to me.
- St catches him on the end to the lost age I shall pray As long as I shall be and the throne of hatred and triumphs over sin Prevote you sovereignly of peace and felicity.
- [3 : 1 9] Let them not run beyond thy peace, our still prosperity.
- Therefore, I wish the peace of sin, praise in my holy name.
- I'll never in thy promises prosperity retain.
- Now for my things I've ever seen, is he in me I see.
- And for the hands of God our Lord, I'll seek thy good away.
- [4 : 4 6] Let's turn together in prayer. Let's pray. O Lord our God, as we come before you this evening out of worship, we give thanks that we can join together in singing your praises with a measure of understanding of the privilege that is ours and the pleasure that is derived from gathering in your name, in the company of your people.
- We pray for your blessing upon our gathering, upon the world under which we are met, that speaks to us of our need, and how that need is to be met in Jesus Christ.
- We pray for it, the blessing of the Most High God, to accompany our reading, our singing, our consideration of your word.
- We have the promise and we claim it, that it will not fall to the ground without accomplishing that which you have purposed for it.

Your purposes in a measure of hidden promise, even though you have disclosed to us through your word, what your intentions are for those who are in this world, and those who even now are unborn.

[6 : 26] We bless you and thank you for the promises that have been realised in the experience of the saints, that not one of them is despondent or experiencing any sorrow or sadness over the realisation of these promises in their experience.

Having lived in this world and come to faith in Jesus Christ, by virtue of your own blessing upon that world of which we spoke. And that they solicited your help and you gave it willingly, and they were by your spirit enabled to embrace Jesus Christ, as he was freely offered to them in the Gospel.

As they lived their life here in this world. So that time came to an end, and the fullness of the promises came to be their possession.

And so it is with all saints, whoever they may be. And we bless you and thank you for all who lay claim to these promises, and who will, in a very short space of time, come into their possession.

We pray for your blessing upon us this evening with all our needs, those known and those hidden, those who are concerned for whatever reason, be it for issues of health, even spiritual health, we pray that you would magnify your name to them, that they may see in the face of Jesus Christ the provision that is made for all our lives, that he is the great physician, even the physician of souls.

[8 : 23] We commit and commend all the cares that are present here, of those who are present, and those who are confined to their homes by reason of illness.

We know that there are many today who are suffering from these winter bugs, and we ask for these to be alleviated, and recovery to be given to them.

We give thanks for glad tidings of new births in the community, and we magnify your name for it, even though this world that we live in holds out many challenges and uncertainties for the children that have been born in this generation.

We give thanks also for news that is glad in a sense, of one of the saints, of our knowledge being taken from this world into your near presence.

One of your own servants who spent his life declaring the word of Christ, and long awaited the home call that has now been delivered.

[9 : 56] We bless you for the testimony that he bore unflinchingly in a world that despised such testimony. But we bless you and thank you that while we may grieve and sorrow with a family that at morning is passing, that such tears are no longer his portion.

We know that he is not a solitary individual who has departed this end of time, even from the beginning of this day. And we pray for all who have sorrows and sadnesses.

Thankful that for those who have entered into the joy of the Lord, that sorrows are no more. For others, we cannot hold out such hopes because your word does not do so.

But we pray for those who grieve, that such grief would be sanctified, and the eyes of the morning would be turned heavenward to seek solace at the hand of one alone who is able to dispense it.

We pray, Lord, for the blessing of God to be upon in the gospel of free grace to the ends of the earth, especially a world that lies in sickness and in sadness and in the grip of the sorrows of the company war.

[11 : 35] We remember before you the nations that are rent-asunderbide, the destruction that is wanton and reckless, lives lost with abandon, with no thought of what this will bring.

Maybe a future generation in bitter, children who are newborn, poisoned by the actions of some others who will shortly leave this world and to give account, as we all missed, at the judgment seat of Christ.

Lord, we pray for you to mercifully intervene and pour out your spirit upon us as nations that have departed so luxuriously from your word and to treat it with the same.

We pray that you would magnify your name amongst us and that we would highlight and heralded amongst our peers. We pray for your blessing upon our congregation as a whole, from the youngest to the oldest, and that you would bless every home and household, even such as have no interest in the things of God.

We know from your word that you are just as likely to turn men and women, young and old, to you, some that have been nurtured within the gospel, some that have been nurtured at other pits that have been polluted with pollutions that only God alone can cleanse.

[13 : 28] We bless you and thank you for the activity of the Holy Spirit and that a wind bloweth where it listeth and no man knows where it goeth.

But we trust that what you do, you do well. So hear our petitions. Draw us to yourself and enable us to be submissive to your word and to yield ourselves to its instruction.

Grant mercy for our many sins. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise.

There's ten verses from Psalm 42. Psalm 42, we're singing six stanzas from the beginning. Verses one to the double stanza.

Psalm 42, we're singing six stanzas from the beginning.

[14 : 30] My soul for God, the living God, the thirst. When shall I near unto thy countenance approach, and in God's sight appear? My tears have unto me been meet, both in the night and day, while unto me continually, where is thy God, they say?

My soul is poured out in me, when this I think upon, because that with the multitude I heretofore had gone. With them into God's house I went, with voice of joy and praise, yea, with the multitude that kept the solemn holy days.

O why art thou cast down, my soul? Why in me so dismayed? Trust God, for I shall praise him yet. His countenance is mine aid.

These verses one to five, Psalm 42, Like as the heart for water brooks, in thirst of pain. And pray. Like as the heart for water brooks, in thirst of pain and pain.

So pass my God, in soul, who's God, have come to thee, I will rest of the solemn Chun, my soul.

[16 : 02] My soul for God, one living God, the lãnger's punch, I hear.

Welcome to thy crown, to lambs of hope, and in God's sight, Outro music God bless you.

God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you.

[19 : 35] God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

[20 : 35] God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless You. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. Christ bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of goodwill. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely supposing to ask affliction to my bonds, but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. For then, notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice, for I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour, yet what I shall choose I walk not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

[22 : 42] Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you, and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and draw your faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus, in Jesus Christ, for me by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which he saw in me, and now here to be in me.

Amen, and may the Lord have his blessing through this reading of his word. To his name be the praise. Let us sing now from Psalm 119, verse 57, and we'll sing this section of the psalm.

Psalm 119, verse 57. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord. I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word.

With my whole heart I did entreat, thy face and favour free, according to thy gracious word, be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well try, and to thy testimonies pure, my feet then turn and die.

[24 : 56] I did not stay nor linger long, as those that slothful are, but hastily thy laws to keep, myself I did prepare.

Bands of ill men me robbed, yet I thy precepts did not slight. I'll rise at midnight thee to praise, even for thy judgment's right.

I am companion to all those who fear and they obey. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. Teach me thy laws, I pray.

This section of Psalm 119 to God's praise. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord. The mighty portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.

I have blessed, O Lord. I have blessed, O Lord. And set the time, O Lord.

[26 : 07] O keep thy holy word. With my whole heart I did entreat, O Lord.

I pray as unfavorably, O Lord. O Lord. O Lord.

O Lord. O Lord. O Lord. Be merciful to me.

I thought upon thy fallen grace, and did my life will die.

Until thy death still mourn each year, my feet then turn the night.

[27 : 19] I did not stay, nor make thy wrong, as those that saw the full earth.

But this will be thy most worthy, my son, and my death prepare.

Thou my soul, O Lord. And so filled man, we'll all get thine. Thy peace that did not slide.

I rise up there, thy feet to praise. In for thy judgment's light.

I am companion to all those who fear and need obey.

[28 : 44] O Lord. O Lord. Thy mercy fills the earth. Teach me thy thoughts, thy way.

Amen. Amen. We turn to the passage that we were reading together.

Paul's epistle to the Philippians, chapter 1. We'll read at the beginning. Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, for you all making requests with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

And so on. The words that we want to focus on are found in verse 5.

[30 : 18] For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.

A renowned preacher and teacher, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, preached a number of sermons on the epistle to the Philippians.

And these sermons were collected in book form. And he maintained, and I don't think there's any reason to disagree with him, that this epistle, written by Paul to the Philippians, was the happiest of all Paul's epistles.

The happiest of all Paul's epistles. Now as he says himself in his introduction to the book, which focused, I think, probably there are more of his writings that cover the whole of the book of Paul's epistles.

But he said, of course, you'll find that joy features in all of Paul's epistles.

[32 : 00] But not so extensively. But not so extensively. And not to the degree that we find it in this epistle. And he makes plain to us that he loved these people very much.

And he did so out of a very full and a glad heart. And his own observation is, I'm talking about Martin Lloyd-Jones, is that probably this was because when he was writing these letters to other congregations and churches, that very often he was dealing with complicated affairs within the congregations.

That there were events that needed to be dealt with at times severely. And at times requiring correction and restoration and repentance.

But this was not true about the congregation in Philippi. Now the congregation itself is a congregation that is found in a place called Philippi, which was on the main route between the southern colonies of Rome and Rome itself.

So if you can imagine Camerun Terrace being Philippi and Calonish being the departure point and Stornow being the destination, Camerun Terrace would be Philippi.

[33 : 51] It's a direct route from one point to the other. And the city was found there. But it was very much a Roman city. Very much, some have called it Little Rome because of the influence that Roman society had upon it.

And another thing is that it was very much because of its location. It was cosmopolitan. It had a lot of different cultures represented within the city.

Different people from different parts of the globe ended up there for one reason or another. And if you go to the book of Acts where you find the initial stages of the formation of our congregation, Lydia is mentioned, the seller of purple.

And she was rich and she was influential. And yet she was one of the first converts. The extreme of that was the Philippian jailer who was charged with looking after Paul, who was imprisoned because of the word of another convert, a young girl who was a slave, but who had the powers of divining or whatever it was.

And those who wanted used that for their own purposes. But having met Paul, she was converted. And they were responsible for sending Paul to prison.

[35 : 46] So you've got this diversity within the church. Converts from all backgrounds and all kinds of different experiences.

And when you think about, and I want you to remember it, when you think about what Paul is saying here, he is remembering his experiences of the people of God within this place.

And not only his encounters with them, but his fellowship with them in the gospel. And as we read, he includes them.

He thanks God for their remembrance. He remembers them frequently. He thanks God for their, for being brought into contact with them.

He remembers them prayerfully. As he brings them to God, he wants God to keep them. I suppose as you read through the epistle, you'll find the kind of things that Paul prays for.

[37 : 01] He also remembers the time that he enjoyed in their company, in fellowship. And the interesting thing for us this evening is I want to focus on the experience that Paul has of fellowship with the church in Philippi.

that it's something he remembers. He experienced it in the past. But it is something that is ongoing. From the first day, he says, until now.

Even though at the present, when he writes this epistle, he's a prisoner. He's a prisoner. He's a prisoner. He's a prisoner. He's a prisoner. And it seems, yet he is able to fellowship with them.

So I want us to think about what Paul means by the experience of fellowship. I want first of all to explain to you the meaning of the word that Paul uses.

He thanks God for your fellowship in the gospel. Then I want us to try and understand something of the benefits that accompany such fellowship in the gospel.

[38 : 39] And that it is something that we need to encourage and something that we need to enjoy.

Now, why do I need to explain the word fellowship? Surely, we all know what the word fellowship means. We've all experienced fellowship.

We've all been in fellowships. Surely. Well, the actual word that is here in the original Greek is the Greek word *koinonia*.

And it originally, in its usage, was a word that was descriptive of a relationship between two or three parties within the realms of business.

They were partners in conducting their business. And they shared the obligations that they were under within that business.

[39 : 50] They shared the benefits of it. Collectively, whether they were twos or threes, they were in partnership one with the other.

Now, it's important, I think, to remember that because the word *koinonia* came to be adapted and used within the Christian church.

And it came to be applied to the relationship that existed within the church. First of all, between the church, the members of the church, their saviour, Jesus Christ.

And then, experience between those who were Christians and fellow Christians. So there are three verses that I want to quote and I want you to remember.

First of all, in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and verse 9 of the first chapter, So there's the word that's used in the sense of a relationship and an encounter between the saviour and the saviour, between the Lord and the Christian.

[41 : 21] The second two verses, first in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 4, praying as with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering of the saints or to the saints.

So there the word is used in the sense of the relationship that exists between God's people. And in particular in that context, it is ministering to the needs of fellow believers.

But in 1 John and chapter 1, there is a more familiar use of it. If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin.

So in that latter verse, there are both elements. Fellowship with Christ and fellowship with his people.

[42 : 45] If you don't have fellowship with Christ, you can't say that you have fellowship with his people because fellowship with Christ is necessary for this fellowship.

So I would like you to keep these verses in mind as we think about this whole idea that we have from the scripture of fellowship being a Christian experience.

And I think it's important. Paul thanks God for the experience.

You know, you look at what he is saying. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. He remembers the people of God. He remembers the people that God put him into contact with.

The people that he preached the word to. The people that he came to know in the gospel. So you would say to yourself, well, surely these people were important to Paul in that he continues to remember them.

[43 : 58] It's important, he says, that he remembers them in every prayer of mine and making requests for you in joy.

Every prayer, he doesn't, you know, he doesn't, he's not somebody who is given to exaggeration. We might say that every prayer we offer, we remember so and so, but Paul, if he says it, he probably means it.

Every prayer that he offers to God, he remembers the church in Philippi. He remembers the people of God in Philippi. God has placed them upon his heart so as to pray for.

So you can imagine it's quite important. But then he says he remembers the fellowship. And if the other two things are important, I would say that fellowship in the gospel is important to Paul as well.

Now, before we go any further, I think it has to be explained that that initial meaning that is given to the word koinonia, where emphasis falls upon partnership, that many of the translations would actually use the word partnership in the gospel.

[45 : 32] And suggesting as a reason for that, that Paul is thankful to God for their partnership in the gospel in the light of their contribution financially to his upkeep and to the promotion of the gospel.

So partnership to them seems the most likely translation of the word koinonia rather than the translation that we have here, fellowship.

It seems more likely to them. And in other places, it is the word that is used to his partnership. Now, I'm not saying that's wrong.

I'm not saying that it's quite legitimate to use the word partnership in that light. But if you read the words of Paul, he talks of this, your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

Now, I would suspect that the relationship that Paul had with them at the outset would not be one that you would call a partnership.

[46 : 58] Maybe they would grow into that. Maybe they would develop as Christians with that relationship coming to the fore. And no doubt it is part of the whole of the meaning of this word.

But I think at this point, Paul is speaking about fellowship in the sense that we understand it, sharing with each other in the things of Christ.

And there is a sense in which we need to remind ourselves that for Paul, his fellowship is, in the first instance, with Christ and then with his people.

And those who are Christ's people are able to access fellowship with Paul because of Christ.

And without Christ, this is not the kind of relationship they can have. It would not be fellowship, is what I'm saying. Paul may have friends that are not Christians.

[48 : 17] He may have acquaintances that are not Christians. He may have people who employed him as a tent maker who are not Christians. But he would not be able to fellowship with them in the same sense that that word means what it does.

So what is it that we can understand by the word fellowship? Maybe you're saying to yourself, how do you need to explain that?

Surely every Christian understands what fellowship is. We've all been in fellowships. We've all been in fellowship with other Christians.

But we need to understand and to remind ourselves of what it is that is essential for fellowship to be.

Fellowship in the sense that the scripture means it. Dolderic McLeod, the late principal Dolderic McLeod, very often spoke about the word koinonia.

[49 : 31] And one thing that disturbed him was looking at the church's experience that the word, the meaning of the word had been devalued.

and by that he meant that often the word was used and all as he put it himself that you had was an informal Christian get together.

It was a shrinking of the word. An informal Christian get together. Now, surely a Christian coming together can be considered fellowship.

Let me give you another quotation, this time Sam Gordon and I'm only giving you a part of what he said and I think he was quite annoyed by the way this had encroached into what is genuine fellowship within the church.

He said the depth of fellowship they experienced was not shallow or superficial. It was not a fuzzy feeling generated by a few minute chat over a cup of tea and sticky buns.

[50 : 55] That's the title fellowship so we'll have a cup of tea biscuit and we'll talk about this that and the other. that is not the original meaning of the word fellowship.

It is not the original experience of the word fellowship. How can how can I say that?

Well, I can say it based on the way the scripture itself describes it to us. In the book of Acts it describes the people of God meeting together and what it says about the people of God was that they met together and that they were of one mind and of one heart and so on.

You know when they met they met as people who knew the Lord and because of their knowledge of the Lord they had come together on the basis of that and shared in their experiences.

Chapter 2 verse 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them three thousand souls as a day of Pentecost and they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread and in prayer and fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles and all that believed were together and had all things common and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need and so their experience was a shared experience and their involvement in the life of the church was an involvement in each other's lives those who were poor and were in need were the beneficiaries of those who had to supply them with that need and so on try and imagine for example a fellowship in the day of

[53 : 45] Paul and in that fellowship you have Lydia and Lydia is there prim and proper with all the trappings of her wealth a background that is quite different to the background of the Philippian jailer a Roman soldier probably quite a brutal background he wouldn't have been entrusted with the keeping of prisoners in a Philippian jail had he not been capable of keeping them in check and ensuring that they would not be liberated but there they are side by side in fellowship so unlike so different in backgrounds you would hardly think that they would have anything to say to each other but what was there to share well one thing they could share about their experience of coming to faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ their diversity of background did not keep them apart Christ brought them together and they shared in their experience I was looking at this I was reminded of being in a home on one occasion a recent convert I suppose I thought at the time he was being a bit of a Philistine but what he meant by it was this the actual social side of it was intruding into the spiritual side of it and to him it was sexatious and a grief

I think he was being a bit over the top honestly but you see what I want to emphasize is that at the heart of the fellowship there is the important matters which is the matters of the soul and the matters that God has brought to be important to us forgive me for reminiscing but I remember being in many homes my only comparison to these homes where there were Dr.

Houston Tardis larger on the inside than they were outside you couldn't imagine how you could manage to cram as many people into these rooms but you did and it was amazing how quickly you would think that being crammed into a room or into two rooms would be uncomfortable and I suppose for a time you did feel a lot is but once the conversation was directed to the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ and the experiences of God's people these other things were forgotten and I'm talking about focusing on the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ and his work in the lives of people if anything what I discovered is this that the thing that most quenches the spirit is to talk about church believe it or not move away from

Christ and talk about church and it spoils it talk about Christian people individuals and the spirit of the Lord vacates the property immediately if the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is not front and centre it is not Christian fellowship it may be a happy get together it may be something a gathering of friends it may be any number of things and just because the friends are Christian it does not make it Christian fellowship and that is what Paul is speaking about here he is speaking about fellowship in the gospel fellowship in the gospel and that is what we long to experience that's what we long to see restored into our communities into our churches

[59 : 13] John MacArthur in his own comments and he believes I suppose that the word that is important here is the word where we're talking about the business relationship and he reckons that what the fellowship is referring to is that they would discuss common ministry goals that they would share in the work of the church and discuss what was needed for the church to proceed and to succeed I think these things are relevant but they cannot go too far away from the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ whatever our hopes are whatever our fears are whatever spiritual blessings we crave they need to be derived from the passion of the

Lord Jesus Christ it's as simple as that one of the first places I came to as a Christian was a congregation here one of the homes I visited was a home in this community I remember being in company with a fellow Christian of similar age to myself and the Christians there they were of mixed age mixed age there was young Christians like myself and they were older Christians but I remember how sensitive the older Christians were to the presence of the young much as they would have liked to have chewed on the strong meat of the gospel they took the conversation down to the level of the lambs they didn't change the conversation away from the gospel but they brought it down to the level of the lambs and

I remember one occasion where the way that was done was to start talking about their own experience and one Christian present one young new believer his his his cross was this that he did not believe that these sports were the sports of God's people he had in his own mind things going on in his heart and in his life that separated him from God's people and that he couldn't really consider himself to be one of them but through the conversation and through the honest acknowledgement of their own experience in the gospel he discovered that he wasn't all that different to the

Lord's people he discovered that the things that were ongoing in his life that were so troubling to him that they were the very problems that others had before him and others have to this day but this is at the heart of fellowship a willingness to share where you are with the Lord a willingness to honestly speak about your own situation your own your own difficulties not to be afraid if you you know if I believe the spirit of the Lord is not present that we're afraid to say well maybe they'll think I'm stupid maybe they'll think I'm not a Christian maybe they think

I don't have what it takes so I won't say anything where this is ongoing where the fellowship of which Paul is speaking is ongoing the honesty that is integral to it comes to the fore there's no phariseism there is no fear that your neighbour will judge you Paul was willing to share with others his own background what he was like what he had done well what kind of fellowship would you like to be what would you like to see taking place in her congregation would you like more fellowship with the

[64 : 53] Lord's people the problem is that you can hardly arrange fellowship today you can hardly stand up in the pulpit or put it in the nation and say we are going to have fellowship in so and so's house next week because so many things intrude into our time and take priority over such time as we have when the reality of what fellowship is all about is it doesn't need to be promoted it doesn't need to be advertised it doesn't need to be cultivated in any meaningful way it's something that the people of God long to experience and once they've experienced they're like the apostle they remember they remember the time well they remember the experience well they remember it and they would wish it to go on and when they can't share in it they do what the apostle is doing always remembering in prayer these people that they shared the time with well may

God give us the grace to be able to recognize that fellowship with the Lord's people is desirable it's something that is body building body building it builds up the body of Christ here in this world it strengthens the people of God or so it should and rather than tear strips of one another we bind each other's wounds rather than be a challenge to our own sovereignty we are willing servants to each other and tying the basin tying the town around our waist and filling the basin with water and washing each other's feet that's what

Christ in enjoying fellowship with his disciples did well we pray that God would encourage us to seek such in our own experience let us pray oh Lord oh God don't allow us to simply speak of these things but to implement them with heartfelt desire that Christ would be preeminent in all our gatherings and that he would draw us to himself that we may fellowship with him through the spirit and with his people by the same spirit hear our prayers and watch over us in Jesus name amen our concluding psalm is psalm 133 psalm 133 the whole psalm to

God's praise behold behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well together such as brethren are in unity to dwell like precious ointment on the head that down the beard did flow even air on spirit and to the skirts that off his garments go as hem on stew the dew that that on Zion sins descend for there the blessing God commands life shall never end behold how good a thing it is behold how good a thing it is as I will be coming well to the earth side as forever are in unity to dwell like precious oil and on the head that down the beard is flow he will hear out to the skirts through the tongue he is humble jackets

O Jesus Christ, for the everlasting Lord Christ, my love shall never end.

[70 : 30] Amen.