

The Philadelphia Witness



the voice of the Church of Jesus Christ

Issue No. 7: 16th January 2009

Greetings brethren!

In September 2007, Pastor General Robert Ardis published his 12th booklet, *The Midnight Cry*, the first one designed especially for those of the scattered churches. It was time for the lost sheep of the house of Israel to be told the intriguing story... the true history of God's Church during the 21 years following the death of God's 20th century Apostle Herbert W. Armstrong. The time had come for God to begin to deliver a wake-up call to God's people who are spiritually asleep. It was time to begin to cry aloud "Behold, the Bridegroom has come" (Matt. 26:6).

This week, another booklet that is directed to those churches presently in the outer court, which God calls "the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 3:9), came through my mailbox. As time has continued to swiftly go by, Mr. Ardis has now published *The Apostasy*.

This 20-page booklet proves that the great falling away from Truth accompanied by the other events prophesied in 2 Thess. 2 has already happened. Mr. Ardis clearly explains that Rev. 3:9 has nothing to do with the world's churches. He reminds the thousands of God's begotten children trapped in the more than 300 disagreeing churches attempting to duplicate the Elijah's work, that God is not calling the world at this time; He is concerned with unfaithful Philadelphians... His shattered and scattered Spiritual Temple snared in the synagogue of Satan... the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

In the same way how when the nation of Israel was divided into two nations, God had especially preserved the southern kingdom of Judah to fulfil the promises He made to David, *in this end time God raised up the Laodicean Church to preserve the Key of David vision*; and this Church likewise went astray and ended up in captivity. However, like the northern kingdom Israel had been *the first* to be defeated, deported and then, after they migrated, became the lost ten tribes of Israel, so it is with spiritual Israel today too; and the Worldwide Church of God and her daughters of the outer court went into spiritual captivity *first* to the man of sin.

Consequently, we need to follow Christ's instruction in Matt. 10:6, "but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel".

In a sermon I gave two weeks ago, *The Great Commission Today*, I emphasised the need to intensify our efforts as we continue to knock for Christ on the door of God's blind begotten children in the Laodicean Church of God (PCG). I know that we will continue to do this, as we also implore Christ to help us reach *every person* who has come close to allowing a "man to take his crown" (Rev. 3:11), but of course *we need to do even more!*

As Jesus Christ's faithful disciples today, we must also go to the lost sheep of the churches of god. Now we know that whatever God does, it always begins like a grain of mustard seed; and this part of God's work today is a prelude to the greatest work yet ahead, which will be accompanied by mighty signs, miracles and wonders. Of course, the two witnesses who prophesy for 1260 days will also be given great power to complete this mighty task (Rev. 11:5-6).

In last week's issue of this publication, I wrote that Mr. Ardis had given the green light to a second publication that will be sent monthly to members and ex-members of the PCG. Well, I can now say that the first issue of *The Midnight Cry... a Magazine of Urgent Understanding* will be published beginning February and this will also be sent to as many lost sheep as possible. I know you will agree that this is indeed *exciting news!*

With much love, in Christ's service

Daniel Frendo

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Marriage - a Physical Union and a Divine Institution - Part 1

by Frank Borg

The gospel message is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14). It points to a time when we will be born as Sons in the God Family Kingdom. Before this human potential is realized in our lives, God is using the time *now* to prepare and mold us so that we can develop the character needed to be born into His family. Once the Kingdom is set up we will be ruling with, and under, Jesus Christ. God's Kingdom is a *family* administering His government.

God established and ordained the physical family unit to be the Kingdom of God in *embryo* so our families are to symbolize this future Kingdom! The physical family is fashioned after the God family because that is our potential! The family is a God-plane relationship; it is a physical union but a divine institution ordained of God.

In the recent US Presidential campaign very little was said about preserving the family unit. The increasing disregard of the most important institution on this earth – the family - has led to many aspects of today's society to contribute to an anti-family culture including illicit sex, teenage pregnancy, divorce, same sex marriage, lack of masculine leadership, undisciplined children, disrespect towards parents and elders, mothers entering the work force and more. This is the anti-family culture that is pervading our society because of sin and because society refuses to keep God in its knowledge (Rom 1:28). Civilization as we knew it is on the way out and God is very angry (Isaiah 1:4)!

Because of our potential and what the physical family represents, Satan primarily targets the marital institution. He wants to *destroy* family because *God is Family!* He wants to undermine it, fight it, turn it upside down, destroy it - and he is increasingly having success in doing so, using the cultural terrorism we see around us (Is. 3:12)! Satan is subjecting his worst wrath ever on the family unit! We in God's Church must be thoroughly aware of this reality if we are going to resist becoming callused to the depravation we see around us. God wants us to condemn what is going on in society, and we do this first and foremost by implementing godly law in our families (Eph. 5:22-25).

As already alluded to, it is imperative that we *go out of our way* and get out of our comfort zones and

strictly apply and adhere to the knowledge that will be discussed. God's knowledge is very encouraging and will always result in the reaping of manifold blessings. Conversely, the bible gives dire warnings against rejecting, or not using, knowledge: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). God desperately wants us to increase our knowledge on this subject because applying it will bring true happiness in our lives now! Family will also be the foundation of society in the World Tomorrow. Deepening our understanding on this vital subject will help us to further develop His mind and reap the resultant blessings that come with its implementation. The degree to which we apply it or not apply it reveals to God the degree to which we embrace it or reject it. Importantly, the degree to which we apply God's Word is the degree to which God gives us more knowledge and deeper understanding. A lack of new and deeper understanding is the result of rejection or a failure to implement God's Word (2 Tim 2:7). Our families must be different! God wants us to strive for excellence in family matters, exemplifying what God's family is really all about!

In the book of Timothy, God lists qualifications and gives admonishment on how the ministry must lead their household. However, these are qualifications *all of God's people* need to improve upon, and strive for, since we will all be helping Christ to serve in the Kingdom: "A bishop then *must*...rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity..." (1 Tim. 3:2, 4). If ministers cannot lead their own household, how can they lead congregations of God's Church? Similarly, if husbands in God's Church don't lead their families the way they should, what business do they have leading in the Kingdom (1 Tim 3:5)? Strong family structure is what gives the Church the foundation it needs, and this includes a *husband leading* his wife and being a good father to his children, his *wife submitting* to her husband as she would to Christ, and obedient children in submission to the loving authority of their parents (Titus 1:6). This is the theocratic government, from the top down, which God has placed in the family.

The bible gives clear, detailed instruction on how individuals are to *lead* and *submit* in a family. All family members applying their God-given roles will strengthen unity, keep peace and exude happiness (1 Cor. 12:25). We each have responsibilities within our family so we will each have to give an account as to

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how we conducted ourselves in those roles! 2 Corinthians 5:10 tells us: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”. God will bring us into judgment for what we have done or not done in our lives – and that includes how we perform or don’t perform in our family unit. Right now, judgment is upon the house of God – that means that judgment is upon *us* (1 Peter 4:17)! God is watching us individually; He is scrutinizing our marriages and our families to see how we are faring (Mal 3:2-3). We must glorify God in every aspect of our lives – including how we relate to each other within the confines of our own homes (1 Cor. 6:20).

We are in the Day of the Lord, around the time when the fifth seal is about to be opened! We stand at the threshold of being born into the spiritual Family of God! Do our physical marriages reflect this? Do they reflect a Day of the Lord mindset? Have we taken on the urgency needed to strive for the perfection God is looking for within our marriages and families? Christ does not want a lackadaisical bride (Mat. 24:46)!

God has placed positions of authority in the family. This has been done so that the family can be edified and united. God wants to see *perfect unity* in our families (Eph 4:16)! Anything less is the beginning of the undermining of this most sacred institution! While we are going through birth pangs now, we must focus on the end result for encouragement and strength – we must constantly keep in remembrance the fact that our physical families will soon culminate in our spiritual marriage to our husband, Jesus Christ. Right now, the Church is at the center of God’s family project. God has given us direction in His Word which, when properly applied, will ensure happiness, love and unity in our families. It is up to us to apply the biblical instruction on marriage!

For the purpose of this series of articles on this subject, we will take a brief look at the various roles within the institution of marriage and family (i.e. husbands, wives, children etc). We will endeavor to understand God’s mind on this most vital subject, *firstly delving into the role of a husband and father.*

As already pointed out, the husband is the head of the family (Eph 5:25). God the Father guides His people (Jer 3:4; Psalm Ps 32:8 etc); Christ guides His Church through His inspired Word (*the bible*) and the ministry. Without this direction and guidance, the Church would fragment and fall apart. Similarly,

husbands have the responsibility to lead and guide their wives and families. Without this guidance, the family will fall apart.

1 Peter 3:7 tells us: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving *honor* unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered”. There is much that can be gleaned from this scripture. First of all, husbands are instructed to ‘honor’ (Strong’s 5092) their wives! Strong’s concordance demonstrates that this scripture is admonishing husbands to *esteem* their wives, treating them as you would something valuable and precious. Husbands must respect their wives even by using proper decorum at all times. Husbands should talk over family plans, seek council and advice from their wives, get feedback, views and opinions from her *before* family decisions are taken. Once in an informed position, it is then the husband’s responsibility to take the final decision on a given subject which should then remain uncontested by other family members. The wife must acknowledge her husband’s authority in the family, submit to his decisions and then support him (Eph 5:22). God ordained this framework to give the family stability and unity, ensuring that the children have the correct, loving, stable environment needed to for positive physical and spiritual upbringing and development.

Husbands must set a good example in right living (Prov. 25:28)! If the right example is given by the head of the household, he will *earn* the respect and submission that is due. The head of the family has the responsibility to *lead, direct and protect* the family both physically and spiritually and in so doing will often have to exercise extra control over his desires. This is a living example in true leadership. Christ was able to keep His every desire under control, living a perfect and upright life. A husband has the responsibility to do the same and set the example and tone for his wife and family (1 Peter 2:21). Selflessness and outgoing concern must come into play if the right example is to be set! In leading his wife spiritually, a husband is encouraged to occasionally pray with his wife and also study with her. A father must encourage family bible studies which will help develop healthy and structured fellowship. This is needed for the edification of the family in the things of God. A husband must lead by example!

God provides for, and maintains, the Church. He has a responsibility toward the Church which He always

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fulfills: “But my God shall supply all your *needs* according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). Christ sets the example and husbands must follow. Husbands must do the same for their wives and families as Christ does for the Church (1 Timothy 5:8). Although a husband is not required to provide luxuries, he is responsible for providing the basic needs and requirements for life such as food, clothing, shelter and some comforts and conveniences. A basic need that a wife has, and which mustn’t be overlooked, is to also fulfill her spiritual obligations towards God. Especially in a family with young children, a husband must ensure that his wife doesn’t get so engulfed with duties related to the children, home and more, that she doesn’t have time to attend to her spiritual obligations. The husband is duty bound to ensure that his wife has time to study and pray – even if he is to step in and help with the children etc., to ensure she has time to carry out her spiritual obligations!

It is important to note that Christ corrects His Church (or His bride). Likewise, husbands must also lovingly correct wives when the situation requires it. Correction must never be done out of vanity or frustration but out of love, patience and in a spirit of meekness; this must never be done out of anger or in the form of ‘lashing out’ or ‘crushing’ their wives. Husbands must always remember how merciful God is with them, and they must strive to exercise that same mercy toward their wives!

1 Peter 3:7 indicates that the wife is the ‘weaker vessel’. This is only referring to physical strength and demonstrates that the husband should take care of the heavier manual jobs around the house and pertaining to the family. This part of the scripture also indicates that there is a difference between the roles of a husband and that of a wife. Both the husband and the wife are equal in that they are both members of the physical family with the same spiritual potential, but they are not equal in authority or roles in the physical family unit. Just as God the Father and Christ are both in the God Family, they are not equal in authority. This is the same in the physical family: we are all members of our respective families, but we do not have equal roles or authority. The husband is the head of the wife and family (Eph 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3), he must lead in love and also protect his family. Men mustn’t fail in this God-given responsibility as this will lead to an upside down family which is predominantly what we see happening in the world around us. A woman needs a strong man that can lead and protect her, but men need to be careful not to abuse or usurp the authority given to them (Col 3:19).

Genesis 3:16 tells us: “Unto the woman he said...thy desire shall be to thy husband and *he shall rule over thee*”. The word ‘rule’ in this verse does not imply a ‘hard or harsh rule’. Men are not to lord it over their wives! This scripture is to be taken in conjunction with 1 Peter 3:7, Ephesians 5 and others. Christ leads with love, concern, and gentleness but He is also firm! If any husband is to be a success in the home, he must follow Christ’s example and the admonition given in the bible. Ephesians 5 defines the clear example set by Christ which husbands are to follow: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it...so ought men to love their wives *as their own bodies*. He that loves his wife loves himself...for no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church” (verses 25, 28-29). These scriptures demonstrate how husbands are to love their wives – with the same love that Christ had for the Church. A husband and father must guide (nourisheth) and encourage (cherisheth) his wife and children as God and Christ do with the Church. Men must rule their wives and their children in love, encouraging them and fostering the right environment for them to reach their physical and spiritual potential!

When husbands do not fulfill their God-given role within marriage, the marital relationship does not function the way it should, resulting in a forfeiture of the blessings that would normally be assigned to the family. Apart from the negative effects this would have on the spouses and children within the family, Satan uses marital troubles to disrupt our relationship with God our Father! Marital and family problems hinder our spiritual course: “...husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife...*that your prayers be not hindered*’ (1 Peter 3:7). When a husband does not lead his wife the way he should, his prayers are not as effective as they should be which causes obstacles in his relationship with God. We must be concerned about this otherwise we are treading dangerous ground: “...whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment...therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; *first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*” (Matt. 5:22-24). Family reconciliation is so important, that if it is not dealt with it will hinder our spiritual progress and relationship with God! This scripture tells us that we must solve any problems in the home if we are to be spiritually effective. Husbands, fathers, must take the lead!

Once the newness of marriage wears off, it is easier to find, and pick at, faults that a spouse might have. This is human nature playing its game – something we must be wary of (Rev 2:4). If this does happen, husbands have a responsibility to lead and perform the *first works* for love to continue and grow (Rev 2:5)! James 2:20 tells us that ‘faith without works is dead’. Similarly, love without works is dead, and husbands must also lead in this area, doing the *first works* that are normally found in a romantic relationship, including spending time together, talking a lot about everything, engaging in activities together, sacrificing and giving to each other! If we are not constantly working at the love in our marital relationship, it will die! Anything that has no works will die!

Lots of hard work has to be put into a marriage – marriages do not just “work out” (Heb 2:1)! In fact, if we only do what comes naturally, our marriages are bound to deteriorate. We must not let human nature run its course. Marriages require plenty of hard work to be built and must be led by the husband. For a marriage and family to work, the supreme love must be between a husband and a wife first, setting the example and creating the right atmosphere for children within the family.

A husband has a tremendous responsibility, yet he has the awesome opportunity to be the representative of God over his marriage and family. Knowing what God expects from husbands is the first step to true family happiness. It is then the responsibility of the husband to apply the knowledge, set the example in studying the bible and prayer, self-discipline and more. A husband that works at his marriage by applying God’s laws, teaching, leading, providing and protecting his family will live to see abundant divine blessings bestowed upon him, his marriage and family!

(To be continued)

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Fellowship

by William Orsi

There is a particular word found in the Bible that, if applied correctly, creates an enormous difference not only in our personal and individual lives but also in that of others. It is an act which when put into practice, brings forth spiritual growth and also strengthens us as God’s people. Without it, there is a probability that the future God family would not exist. I believe that all members of the Church of God, might as well forget their daily battles in overcoming Satan, as there would be no God family to live in for eternity if fellowship is not put into practice. It is a word that if not applied in our lives, is able to make or break God’s Divine Plan, that of becoming heirs together with Christ. This word is none other than ‘fellowship’.

What is fellowship?

We all have a fairly good understanding of the meaning of the word ‘fellowship’, however, let’s go to the dictionary definition first. We can start with the standard definition to be found in the Internet Dictionary ‘Wordweb’:

- 1 - An association of people who share common beliefs or activities
- 2 - The state of being with someone as in companionship

Webster’s Dictionary (printed) gives us similar definitions of fellowship such as: community of interest, activity, feeling, or experience; a company of equals or friends.

In Strong’s Concordance we see that the meaning of the word fellowship includes amongst others: a partnership, (social) intercourse, (pecuniary) benefaction, to communicate, communion, distribution, fellowship, partaker, fellowship.

Taking all the above definitions into consideration, we find that to fellowship means to associate with people, to share common beliefs and activities and to be partakers in these same common beliefs and activities. We see that to fellowship means to be companions with and to communicate with each other.

What does the Bible have to say about fellowshiping, especially in light of the definitions covered above?

When our Lord, Jesus Christ called His disciples into the ministry here on earth, it was the banding together of a ‘communion’ of followers. We know that He was

not interested in having just one or two members in this communion; however, Jesus was also only interested in having a select few form part of His fellowship. This fellowship was only open to those who would respond to a call issued by our Heavenly Father. We find note of this in John 6:44 which states: "No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day" So, other than the twelve, who later became apostles, who else did the Father call? Today, God's end-time Church has splintered and fractured into several groups, with Christ heading the Church of God's Faithful which is knocking on the door of Loadicea as we are told in Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with me." Within God's Faithful Church is an important segment of people whom He has called from the "highways and the hedges"; we know this from the familiar verse found in Luke 14:23 "And the Lord said to the servant, go out into the highway and hedges and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled." The Lord here, of course, is Jesus Christ. From this verse we see that Christ wants His house to be full of divine spirit beings. Why? Why would the God Family sacrifice so much to want to have a large family, going as far as to pull people in from the highways and hedges? In order to understand, we go to the beginning when only the Father and the Word existed! It is obvious that after having spent so much time alone, They both planned to have a large family in order to fellowship and live in peace and Their way of love for ever! Christ is only too willing to fellowship and share **everything** with those of His house! This makes it equally clear that He intended fellowship to be part of His ministry; without it He would have been unable to dine, to pray (our fellowship with God), to commune and to share His wisdom. Human experiences show that such acts as sharing a meal with family and friends pull us close together and is a fantastic board to sharing common beliefs.

With whom do we fellowship?

To some extent or other, we all have some form of fellowship with most people we come into contact with, whether at work or with neighbours or friends. Here however, we will deal specifically with the fellowship that should be taking place within God's Church. Is it necessary for us to focus on the fellowship that takes place daily or weekly by members of the CGF? We already know that by definition fellowship requires an association with

those who share common interests and beliefs. As members of God's One True Body, we are certainly required to fellowship. In II Corinthians 6:14 we read: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship does righteousness have with lawlessness? And what partnership does light have with darkness." This verse specifically shows that we are to be a light unto the world so that others can see we are God's people. Also, as members of God's Church in embryo, we are all equally yoked together and therefore have much more in common than with those who are not at this time a part of His Church. When we fellowship with people who do not have God's Holy Spirit and therefore are unable to understand His Word and divine Purpose for mankind, anything we do say about our beliefs is usually not taken seriously. As the true Body of Christ, we share and find companionship in each other and in the Father and Christ through His Word. We are partners with like-minded members and are not to yoke or enter into partnership with unbelievers, though of course, we still do commune with others outside the Church in love and in order to let our light shine.

Why do we fellowship?

It has been said, "No man is an island." It is fairly reasonable to conclude that if man were in fact an island, like that island he would be living a very solitary life, with limited scope and capacity to produce the necessary growth or activity. Living a solitary life would be rather difficult for man as we were created to need one another, hence the husband and wife relationship! It's also rather difficult to accomplish things alone. One could build a house by himself, but it would be a slow process probably ending up in not being built at all. This principle applies to the learning of new Truth that we are currently receiving. It would take an age for new members in the Church to learn and have the same foundation as that of long-time members if they had to go it alone and learn by themselves. It is common knowledge that if not pointed in the right direction by God's ministry, the Bible would be a confusing book; as it is written "here a little, there a little." Without proper guidance, it would be a quasi-impossible task to accomplish alone. Imagine if you will, that you are a totally new member to God's Church and do not have the opportunity to fellowship with anyone; would not that render your learning all that longterm members know, a truly mammoth task? Going it alone like that might push you to give up! New members have a special need to be encouraged, to be guided and to share experiences with others. Without the

necessary fellowship, iron sharpening iron, the new member would fall away. Discouragement could easily set in with the knowledge that it would be nigh impossible to 'catch up'! It is one thing for new CGF members (with a WCG and/or PCG background) to pick up what is being taught due to their solid foundation, quite another for a new CGF member from the 'highways and hedges', fresh out of the world, to suddenly hear new truths and doctrines and grasp what is being taught without being able to speak about these with fellow members. Having no one to talk to and be strengthened by leaves new members feeling weak and inadequate! Fellowship helps build new members into strong ones!

In II Cor. 7:13 we find that fellowship brings each of us comfort and joy and this is reciprocal. This verse states: "Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort, and we rather rejoiced more abundantly over the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all."

Here we see that our spirit is refreshed when we fellowship. Further in II Cor. 8:1-4 it is written: "And, brothers, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given among the churches of Macedonia; that in much testing of trouble, the overflowing of their joy, and the depth of their poverty, abounded to the riches of their generosity." One of the fruits of fellowship is that we can 'make known' to each other the grace of God thereby abounding in the riches of the Holy Spirit; another fruit is that of love and generosity. Fellowship is therefore a generous act of giving.

In II Cor. 8:3-4 we read: "For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability; they gave willingly; with much beseeching us that they might receive of us the grace and the fellowship of the ministry to the saints." Fellowship is a "willing act of giving". We must be willing to serve God by fellowshiping with one another just as Christ was willing to fellowship with those He knew needed His help. What would have happened if Christ never fellowshiped? Would He have had such a following? Would His true gospel ever have been known? Where would we be today if God had not spoken to us? What hope would we have for any kind of spiritual future? We see that, through fellowship the Apostles had with one another as well as with those of the Church of Macedonia, there was much joy to be had by all. The joy the Apostles received through their encouragement and support of one another was also received by those who hungered for their fellowship as well.

Let's go on to read II Cor. 9:12 "For the ministry of this service not only supplies the things lacking of the saints, but also multiplying through many thanksgivings to God." Here we see that God has blessed us with fellowship which is a 'service' that is there not only for our benefit but also for those we fellowship with. It is there not only for the comfort and joy it brings to those who fellowship but helps us to grow in the grace of God and in His Holy Spirit! Fellowship is a generous thing as is emphasised in II Cor. 8:2 "that in much testing of trouble, the overflowing of their joy, and the depth of their poverty, abounded to the riches of their generosity."

Today people seem to think that to be generous to others one has to pay a price. Fellowshiping with the brethren, whether old-timers or not, costs nothing more than a few precious moments of our time. That is the only price to pay. In II Cor 9:13-15 we read: "through the proof of this ministry they glorify God for your freely expressed submission to the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of the fellowship toward them and toward all. And in their prayer for you, who long after you, because of the exceeding grace of God on you. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable free gift." Please note that the 'generosity of fellowship' gives glory to God. We also will receive the grace of God for fellowshiping. Through the above we see that fellowship is something God thinks is good for each of us. This is an unspeakably awesome free gift. "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen." We are even given the fellowship of the Holy Spirit too. Do we see how significant it is to fellowship?

Another aspect of what it means to fellowship is found in Philippians 1:3-7 "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making my request for you all with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, even as it is righteous for me to think of this of you all, because you have me in your heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partaker of my grace." Philippians 2:1-7 says "If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tenderness and mercies, then fulfill my joy, that you may be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Do not let each man look upon his own

things (like our precious time), but each man also on the things of others (for what we deem to be our precious time through fellowshiping becomes precious to those with whom we share it). For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.”

From these scriptures it is evident that we are to partake in fellowship and in so doing it is not only beneficial to ourselves but we also help others to grow. We have been commanded by the Great Eternal God to be like-minded in Christ Jesus, to live with the mind of Christ. Let us make a great effort to be mindful of our need to fellowship thereby fulfilling our obligation towards one another so that all may rejoice in the magnificent blessing bestowed upon us by our truly great God.

Why do we fellowship? In Philemon 1:6 we read “that the fellowship of your faith may operate in a full knowledge of every good thing in you in Christ Jesus.” Fellowshiping is an act we express towards one another that we may have full knowledge of every good thing in Christ. I John 1:1-7 “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of Life, (for the Life was revealed, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show to you the everlasting Life, who was with the Father and was revealed to us), that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you so that your joy may be full. And this is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

We see here in I John that, had fellowshiping never been a part of Christ’s ministry and were it not intended for the strengthening of our knowledge and faith in God and to aid in one another’s spiritual growth, none of us would be able to reap the fruits which God has given to each of us.

We have come to understand the meaning of fellowship and how important it is. However, this leads to another question. How does one fellowship? One might feel that one lives too far away from other members of God’s Church to be able to fellowship or perhaps might not own a computer or telephone or the finances to call brethren on a regular basis. We have read about the blessings God the Father will bestow upon us for taking the time to fellowship with one another. There is more. Our great, Eternal Father so truly want us to receive the blessings to be garnered from fellowship that He actually commands it. In Hebrews 13:16 we read “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” So, it seems obvious that we should find ways to fellowship in order to further obey the Father despite our geographical or financial situation. Here are a few inexpensive ways in which we can do our part to fellowship with our brethren:

Choose at least 3 members whom you will say hello to at least once a week, asking how they get along. These 3 members should be outside our physical families. Reach out to those who have no CGF family nearby. If those three people then choose three others and so forth, within no time one would be fellowshiping with four persons at least. Share your phone number with others and you need only spend between five to ten minutes on the phone, always taking turns, especially if you have unlimited long-distance service, as we do at home. If this is unaffordable, but have a computer, send an email. Avoid blanket emails; personal emails make recipients feel more special. Download Skype for free and talk to each other for free provided a microphone is available. There is always snail mail; a postage stamp doesn’t cost too much, yet a card says so much! Of course we can always use James 5:16! It only takes a few minutes to drop each other a note there.

Many new members coming from the ‘highways and hedges’ need all the help they can get from the more well-versed member in the Church. They should not be allowed to feel overwhelmed trying to learn everything in such a short space of time. We don’t want to see them become disillusioned and throwing in the towel! We have an obligation to each other! The Almighty Father requires that we sacrifice ourselves and give of our time so that our joy will become theirs. We shall be greatly blessed if we cheer up those who are ill, letting them know we are praying for them. Let’s not be apathetic! God will bless us for all we do for our brethren.