

## A People Who Meet Together

**Aim:** To help encourage us to meet together regularly and to be a blessing to each other.

**Discuss:** A pastor visited a man in his congregation, who attended church rarely; always finding excuses for not attending. On a cold winter's day, after entering the man's home, the pastor walked over to the fireplace, picked up the tongs, and removed a coal from the fire. He then placed it by itself on the hearth. The man thought his actions strange, but as they talked, the pastor's actions hit home. If we choose not to have fellowship, we will become like that removed coal – cold! By not having fellowship we also reduce the warmth and heat of the remaining coals in the fire. We are “living coals,” designed by God to burn brightly when brought together in close association (in fellowship). *[Discuss]*

### **Fellowship – What is it?**

*Fellowship is not just about tending church. What other ways can we have fellowship?*

We have fellowship in home groups, when we meet up with a Christian, when we have home devotions.

*What's the difference between fellowship and Christians just socializing?*

Fellowship is meeting in the name of Jesus, and where we are meeting to bless each other and encourage one another – it's about giving, even though we also receive.

### **Fellowship at the Start of the Church**

*Read Acts 2:42. What characterised the first believers?*

The first believers were continually devoted to four key practices; apostle's teaching (which became the New Testament), to fellowship, to breaking of bread (communion with fellowship meals), and to prayer.

*In Acts 2:42 fellowship is mentioned. What did it look like? (Acts 2:43-47)*

The first believers met regularly and even daily. They were constantly caring for each other, sharing meals together, and praising God together. Their fellowship was vibrant and practical.

*What caused the first believers to have a heart for fellowship?*

The Holy Spirit had filled their lives and given them such a strong sense that they were now in God's family. Though we're saved individually, once saved, we become part of God's saved people. *[Discuss]*

### **Fellowship Here and Now**

*Fellowship was not just designed by God to help believers at the start of the church. It is to be our constant practice until Christ returns. What do we learn in Heb 10:25?*

We are not to forsake fellowship – meeting in Jesus' name. Sadly, as time went on, some began to no longer meet. The Hebrew writer had to challenge Christians not to continue this dangerous practice.

*There are many, today, who call themselves a Christian, and who don't have fellowship. What are the common excuses given? Were you ever a person who didn't have fellowship for a time. Why?*

There are many reasons why we might choose not to have fellowship; eg, tiredness, little commitment, wrong priorities, personal conflicts with others, don't get anything out of fellowship, etc.

*For Christians who don't have fellowship, how do you think it will go when they give an account of their life before Jesus one day? Will Jesus be tolerant of their reason not to have fellowship?*

Jesus commanded us to have fellowship, and the Holy Spirit leads us to have fellowship. There is no excuse. There is no way around Heb 10:25. We are called to have fellowship, and that's it!

*What happens to people who start missing fellowship without any good reason?*

It becomes a habit, and finally they don't come anymore. Then they can lose their fire for the Lord (like a coal removed from a fire), and they can even fall away from the Lord. Don't forget: this danger of forsaking fellowship is part of the devil's plan to nullify our Christian service and shipwreck our faith.

*Read Heb 10:24-25? What's the key to good and right fellowship?*

It's to encourage each other in our Christian walk, and to spur one another on to love and good deeds for Christ's glory. This can't happen unless we are catching up with each other and having fellowship.

*Besides God's Spirit encouraging us to have fellowship, why else should we? (cf. Heb 10:25b)*

Christ's glorious return is near, and as we have been taught, the world will become more darker and ungodly (2 Tim 3:1-5). Fellowship is key in helping us to continue on and to persevere (cf. Heb 10:23).

*What else should spur us on to the end having regular fellowship? (Heb 10:23; Rev 7:15-17)*

God is faithful, our hope is sure, and one day we will enjoy fellowship forever in God's presence.

**Summary:** Never forsake fellowship; always encourage and spur one another on in the Lord.