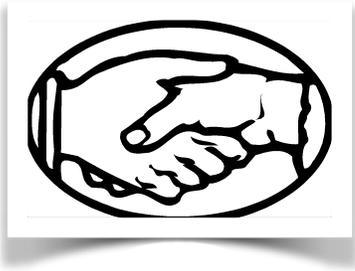


8 OTHER CHRISTIANS



What is My Relationship to Other Christians?

In this lesson, we will study the special relationship which you now have with your spiritual family.

This lesson is designed to give the individual a clear understanding of how the body of Christ operates as a family unit.

I. How Am I Related to Other Christians?

- A. They are your brothers (and sisters) in Jesus Christ. Be sure to understand, only those in Jesus Christ (saved people) are your brothers, regardless of any other factors. Likewise, those *not* in Jesus Christ (unsaved people) are not your brothers regardless of any other factors. *Romans 8:29; 9:8, Hebrews 2:9-12*
- B. They are your fellow laborers in service for Jesus Christ. *1Corinthians 3:5-10*

II. What Are My Responsibilities Toward Other Christians?

- A. We are to pray for each other. Almost every one of Paul's letters opens with a prayer for those he is writing to. *1Thessalonians 1:2-3, 2Timothy 1:3*
- B. We are to minister to each other.
 - 1. Physically - For those in your immediate family. *Galatians 6:10, Romans 12:13* As well as the entire body of Christ in other areas. *Acts 11:27-30*
 - 2. Spiritually. *Galatians 6:1-2, Romans 15:1-2, Hebrews 13:3*
- C. We are to encourage and edify one another. *1Thessalonians 5: 11*
- D. We are to serve one another. *Philippians 2:3-4, Matthew 20:25-28*

III. What Should Be My Attitude Toward Other Christians?

- A. The primary attitude should be to love them. *1John 3: 14-16, 1Peter 4:8*
- B. Be patient with them. *Romans 15:5-7*
- C. Be sensitive to their needs. *1John 3:17-18, James 2:15-16*
- D. Be forgiving to each other. *Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13*

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IV. What is "Fellowship?"

- A. "Fellowship" is a term commonly used by Christians generally referring to getting together for activities or times of sharing common interests. However, this is only a small part of true fellowship. It is true that to fellowship is to share things, but true biblical fellowship goes *far beyond* just a meal or an activity. It is the sharing of life through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ with another believer.
- B. The essential elements of true biblical fellowship are not physical matters such as social status, friendship, common interests, etc.; they are spiritual requirements of personal character.
 - 1. Humility - Philippians 2:3-8
 - 2. Honesty - Ephesians 4:25, 2 Corinthians 4:2
 - 3. Love - John 13:35, Galatians 5:13-15
 - 4. Hospitality - Titus 1:8, Acts 2:42, 46-47
- C. The areas of true fellowship include, among others:
 - 1. Prayer - 2 Corinthians 1:11
 - 2. Faith - Romans 1:12
 - 3. Ministry - 2 Corinthians 8:4, Galatians 2:9
 - 4. Suffering - Philippians 3:10, 1 Peter 4:13; 5:1
- D. Although doctrinal beliefs are vitally important, true biblical fellowship is not based on exact doctrinal agreement, but in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. You *must learn* to have fellowship with Him personally before your fellowship with other believers will be proper. *1 John 1:3-7*

V. Basic Questions.

- A. What if another Christian offends me? Unfortunately, this will probably happen to you if you spend any time with your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. There will be times of offense, hurt, and disagreement within the body of Christ, just as in your physical family. If and when this happens, if it is serious enough, the Bible gives a definite progression of principles to deal with the matter. How should you respond in such a case?
 - 1. Take the offense directly to the other party first, privately, and try to settle it between yourselves. *Matthew 18:15*
 - 2. If the matter is not resolved privately, take it to .:, a leader in your church to attempt to mediate the situation. *Matthew 18:16, 1 Corinthians 6:1-5*
 - 3. Do NOT go to the unsaved to settle a problem within the body of Christ. *1 Corinthians 6:6*
 - 4. If this matter still cannot be resolved:
 - a. Personally accept the wrong. *1 Corinthians 6:7-8*
 - b. Commit the situation to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will handle it justly. *1 Peter 2:19-23*
 - c. Forgive your brother. *Colossians 3:13*
 - d. Pray for your brother. *Matthew 5:43-48, Romans 12:14*