

# [ led fellows ]

## :: philippians 2.19-24 ::

This morning we're in Philippians chapter 2, verses 19 through 24 and we're going to be talking about fellowship, which is a very significant and very important aspect of the Christian life.

Now, I think sometimes we think of fellowship in the sense of friendship, or just when we're spending time with other Christians at church or when we're out and about.

However, the concept of fellowship in the Scriptures is something very dynamic and very in depth. It's more than a social interaction. It's more than acquaintanceship or even friendship. It is something heavenly that God has given to His Church. It's powerful and intimate. It's an relationship of participation and communion together, fueled by God's Spirit and useful in producing God's will in our lives.

Our text gives us 6 insights into Christian fellowship. Not only what it is, but *how we do it*.

So, starting in verse 19 of chapter 2, we read this:

**Philippians 2.19-24 - But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.**

6 verses with 6 elements to consider.

First, fellowship is about **sharing** with one another.

Verse 19:

**Philippians 2.19 - But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.**

The fundamental beginning of Christian fellowship is going past introduction and entering into involvement on a spiritual and physical level. Paul is saying here that what happens to the Philippians has an impact on him and vice versa. It's important to him that they share what's going on. It's more than a hello. It's more than a friendship. It's a connection together between people who have shared their lives and who have a common goal of glorifying the Lord.

In the Bible, God's people are called upon to go past introduction and into involvement with one another. He calls us to assemble together and to bear one another's burdens. We're to

confess our sins to one another and exhort one another. We're to have an intimate, personal relationship with other Christians, centered on Jesus and cooperative with each other.

Now, I'm not saying that every person who's a Christian has to be a vacation buddy and a best friend or someone you talk to every night for an hour. But, Christian to Christian, we're to have a care for each other and an involvement in each other's lives. Not isolated, but connected together. The things that are going on in the lives of the other Christians in this church or at our jobs or in our families should concern us. They should be important to us. Because we are called to mindset and a lifestyle of focus on **God** and focus on **others**. Paul's given us lots of words about being others-oriented as we submit ourselves to Jesus' Lordship already in this book.

Fellowship is about really sharing. Not just socializing.

Next, verse 20:

**Philippians 2.20 - For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.**

The second aspect of fellowship is *sincerity*. I find that I tend to be a bare minimum kind of guy. What's the least I can do so that I can say my goal has been accomplished? But that's not how it works in the Church.

This is why taking on the mind of Christ is essential to our Christian living. Because, without the mind of Christ, we're going to have an impossible time dying to self. And if we fail to die to self, we're going to have a very difficult time when it comes to others, when it's time to rejoice with them or mourn with them.

Even Paul points out that there are very few people who take on the mind of Christ. But we're called to a sincere care for our fellow Believers.

The way we cultivate that fruit in our lives is to ask the Lord for it. To be diligent about asking God to give us a greater love and a greater compassion and a greater mercy for the Christians around us. God is not going to withhold those desires from you. We receive that sincerity from Him as we receive His heart and His vision and His desire.

We want the treasures of our faith to be sincere and genuine, not counterfeit or corrupted. We receive that purifying and refining from Jesus Christ who will work in us a mind and heart that is dedicated to caring for others.

Next, verse 21:

**Philippians 2.21 - For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.**

We're called to *sharing* in our fellowship. We're called to *sincerity* in our fellowship. And here we see that a key in our relationship to one another is that we *seek* the things which are of Christ Jesus. That's up to us.

As H.A. Ironside points out,

*“Our standing before God is one thing; our actual state is another.”*

If we take anything away from our studies in this Epistle, it should be that the Christian life is not lived passively, but actively. Actively submitting to God, actively thinking of others, actively preaching and testifying of Jesus Christ as hope and salvation.

But we not only run *toward* these heavenly pursuits, we’re also called to run *away* from carnality and worldliness and self-glorification. And as individuals and a church, we’re to surrender our activity to the sovereign will of God, who, as we’ve seen, has a plan, not only for each life individually, but also has greater plans for the church and the world at large.

When we become self-centered and when we are seeking to benefit ourselves rather than serve and edify those around us, we invariably become neglectful of God’s plan for our lives.

A good daily reminder is found in Matthew 6:

**Matthew 6.31-33 - “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

**Seeking** the things of Christ means having a heavenly, ministry mindset and dying to the desire for riches and greatness and other self-glorifications.

Fourth principle, verse 22:

**Philippians 2.22 - But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the Gospel.**

**Service** is our next application. The Greek word there translates literally as ‘to be a slave to’ the Gospel.

God has given us commands in His word. We are to carry them out.

He’s given us the Church and called us to be a part of it, not optionally but essentially.

And within the Church we find all sorts of opportunities to serve not only God, but one another as well. There are all sorts of ministries that afford us the chance to take up the role of a bondservant and stoop down to do what Jesus did while He was on the earth.

As we see in Timothy, as far as God is concerned, your character is proven by how you serve the Lord, how you serve the Church and how you serve the Gospel. Living the Christian life means fellowshipping through service. Slave service.

Verse 23:

**Philippians 2.23 - Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.**

Remember, Paul was hoping that God would allow him to visit Philippi himself. But, depending on what happened with his trial, he planned to send Timothy.

This brings us to our 5th perspective on fellowship and that is: **sending**.

We are called to evaluate needs and then to **send** on behalf of others. Whether it was a gift of generosity, like the one that the Philippians sent to Paul when he was in need, or whether it is the help of an actual person, as Paul was sending to them. Timothy was sent as a minister and pastor to this flock, because that was a need that they had during this difficult time in the history of the Church.

As we share with one another, either within the local congregation or in the Church at large, we will discover needs and gaps. The Biblical response isn't, 'that's a shame.' It's, 'Lord, what can we do about that?'

From that mindset, from that commitment to **sending**, God will direct us as He did Paul. 'We wanted to go to Asia, but the Spirit forbade us. We wanted to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit said no.' Instead, they were sent to Macedonia, where God had something very special for them. God directs as we make ourselves available to go where He wants us to go.

This is the model that we have of how God moves His people around, as they are Spirit-filled and Spirit-led.

But, if we're unwilling to go. If we're apathetic and discompassionate, if we're disinterested in sending or being sent, then the model isn't Paul in the book of Acts, but it's more like Jonah back in the Old Testament.

We need to have a commitment to **sending** and **being sent** as Believers fellowshiping together. We need to have a willingness to send help across the sanctuary, across the county, across the world. We need Isaiah's heart: **Here I Am Lord, Send Me!** That's God's intention for the Church and for His people. Not everyone will be called overseas, but everyone *IS* called to minister.

Finally, in verse 24, we see our sixth aspect of Christian fellowship:

**Philippians 2.24 - But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.**

Our fellowship should be characterized by **sureness**. As we share, as we serve, as we seek God, as we do all these things, we should be confident and sure that God is present and alive, that His desire is to move. We should be people of faith.

The Bible calls us to walk by faith, not by sight. How do we receive that faith? As always, we receive it from God, who desires to give it to His people.

We are called to a special relationship together as Christians, Christ's Body on the earth. To live out our fellowship as the Lord intends we must take up these callings to share, to sincerity, to

seek the Lord, to serve one another, to send of ourselves and of our congregations and to rest in the surety of God's power and His plan for this world.

Those are the identifiers of healthy Christian living and those are the byproducts of Godly fellowship one with another.

It all begins with asking Jesus to bear these fruits in our lives and then stepping forward in faithful action as He does. This is the calling we have together until we are forever with our Lord, glorified and completed in the place He's prepared for us.