

# ROOKIE CHRISTIAN | FACT SHEET

## How Church Helps Us in the Christian Life

The Christian life isn't supposed to be a solo. It is lived out in the community of faith.

### **Fellowship is a Relationship Based on Things Held**

**in Common:** Fellow-ship begins with two fellows in the same boat; that is, it is a relationship based on things held in common. In Christ we have much in common. – a common Master, a common message, a common mission, a common struggle to grow...

Here's a verse with a surprising phrase: First John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light"

*If we walk in the light as God is in the light we have fellowship with...* Who do you think it's going to say we have fellowship with? If you've never heard the verse before, you might guess God... because the passage talks about God being in the light. Verse 5 had just said that "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." But the verse doesn't say God is the one with whom we have fellowship, but rather, "one another." "If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, *we have fellowship with one another*" ...Because fellowship is a relationship based on things held in common—the most important things in the universe.

Someone may say, "I already have friends; I don't need Christian fellowship." Well, we're not saying you should dump your friends, but you just understand that if you walk in the light with the Lord, you are going to have fellowship with others who are doing the same thing.

### **Don't Make Fun of a Strong Man's Wife:**

There are many people who say something along the lines of "I love Jesus;



it's the church I don't like"

Be advised: In multiple places in the New Testament, the church is compared to a bride and Jesus is compared to a bridegroom. For example, when his people are united with the Lord in Heaven, Revelation 19:7 says, "The marriage of the Lamb [that is, Jesus]... the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready" In another place, the Bible says "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (Revelation 21:9).

If you had a friend and this friend is a weightlifter and is strong and fast, are you going to insult his wife? First, you wouldn't do that because he's your friend – and you wouldn't want to show disrespect like that to your friend. And, second, if you did insult his wife and make him angry, he could seriously hurt you!

Ephesians 5 talks about marriage and describes marriage as a picture of Christ's relationship to the church. Verse 25 says, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." People who love Jesus... love the things Jesus loves... and Jesus loves the church.

### **Ways Fellowship Nurtures Our Christian Growth:**

Fellowship at church helps nurture our Christian growth in several ways.

First, a strong, healthy church has *an uplifting tone*. One gets an "up-look" for having been together, and leaves the gathering of believers feeling inspired.

Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Used by permission.

Church provides a *culture of normal*. A lot of people grew up in a broken home, but they can see happy families modeled at church. They can see what people are like who are whole. They can see what a Christian man looks like. One is around people who don't cuss, don't gossip, and aren't negative — people who are really trying to live for the Lord. The proverbial church hypocrites notwithstanding, we see examples all around us in a healthy church.



*Nurturing fellowship means one hears other believers' stories of their Christian journey.* You hear stories about conversion, about spiritual growth, and about serving the Lord—and you relate. One brother shares how the Lord enabled him to overcome a sinful habit. Someone else tells how she was finally able to tell her sister about Jesus. This gives us a mental picture of what some new aspect of growth and service, which we have not yet personally experienced, might look like.

*There are people to encourage you.* In the world, there is always someone to beat you down and make you feel like a loser. Certainly, the devil enjoys beating us up over our sins. In a healthy church, they build you up.

*The accountability helps us stay on track.* We need to know others are counting on us. Sometimes, we need someone to ask us why we were absent or how things are going spiritually.

*It provides a support group.* Many, many times, I have seen church members go through a health crisis or experience the loss of a loved one, and heard them remark that they didn't understand how people without a church family could make it through life events such as that. We need someone there for us when life hurts. We need someone who won't kick us when we're down. We need

someone who will love us and pray for us. People who will brush us off and get us back into the game.

It's important for a person to connect to a group of fellow-believers in nurturing fellowship. Jesus' plan was for that group to be the local church.

### **Solid Bible Teaching:**

One of the great opportunities in a good church is to sit under solid Bible teaching. A good church will have a pastor who has been trained in the Bible — its background, its history, and its meaning. He has been trained in doctrine—the truth about God, about ourselves, and about the world around us. Personal study is vital, but sitting under the solid teaching of church leaders is a check against novel ideas that aren't biblically sound.

Culture tends to go one way while God would have us go in another way. The Bible warns: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires" (2 Timothy 4:3).

Titus 1:9 tells us a pastor should hold "fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." He doesn't mean, of course, that church is supposed to be full of constant controversy and religious arguments. These same books of the Bible warn against silly word battles. He means the pastor should stick to the Bible and know his stuff. ...because his task is to feed the flock with the truth of God's Word.

We all need Christian fellowship which nurtures our faith and life. And Jesus established the church as the context in which we could experience the nurturing power of Christian fellowship.

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