

**Title** : The Joy of True Fellowship  
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## Introduction

1. In times of personal and ministry trials Paul found strength and joy in his fellowship with fellow believers (Philippians 1:3-9)
2. The fellowship of believers in the early church was one that was unique-beyond biological, ethnic, gender and national bonds (Matthew 19:29, Galatians 3:28)

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”

3. The Greek word used to describe this special bond of fellowship is *koinonia*
  - a. It occurs 20 times in the Bible and is first used in Acts 2:42,
  - b. Christian fellowship was a vital component of the Early Church and is what has helped see the Church through times of great isolation and persecution
  - c. Being in true fellowship in *koinonia* is “being like minded having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose (Philippians 2:1-2)
  - d. This is because our common *koinonia* with each other is based on our own personal and shared *koinonia* with Jesus Himself (1 John 1: 6-7)
  - e. *Koinonia* is expressed through the demonstration of love, faith, and encouragement in a community which then becomes a powerful representation of Jesus Himself in our world (John 13:35)

## True Fellowship demands considering one another at all times

We must:

In Thought:

- Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
- Honour one another (Romans 12:10)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)

“Quiet Thoughts” by Paul S. McElroy:

“A Spanish scholar of the twelfth century, Moses Maimonides, depicts seven steps in what he calls the ladder of charity and giving: The first and lowest degree is to give but with reluctance. The second is to give cheerfully, but not in proportion to the distress of the sufferer. The third step is to give cheerfully and proportionately, but not until solicited. The fourth is to give cheerfully, proportionately and unsolicitedly, but yourself to put the gift in the poor man’s hand, thus exciting in him the painful emotion of shame. The fifth is to know the object of your bounty, but to remain unknown to him. The sixth is to bestow charity in such a way that the benefactor may not know the recipient, nor the recipient his benefactor. The seventh and worthiest step is to anticipate charity

by preventing poverty. This is the highest step and the summit of charity's golden ladder”<sup>1</sup>

In Deed:

- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16; 1 Peter 3:8)
- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13)
- Serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13)
- Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
- Spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)

## **Conclusion**

Above all, love one another (1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11; 3:23; 4:7; 4:11-12)

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Degrees of Giving, an extract from “Quiet Thoughts” by Paul S. McElroy