

KNOWING THE BODY—THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BODY

First Morning Session—Message Three

The Fellowship of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3

I. We need to have a complete, thorough knowledge concerning the fellowship of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16-17:

- A. The Body of Christ is uniquely one universally, and the fellowship of the Body of Christ is also uniquely one universally—Eph. 4:4-6.
- B. Fellowship is the issue of the eternal life and is actually the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, who have received and possess the divine life—1 John 1:3.
- C. This fellowship is illustrated by the flow of the water of life in the New Jerusalem—Rev. 22:1.
- D. This fellowship is carried on by the Spirit in our regenerated spirit; hence it is called the “fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14) and “fellowship of [our] spirit” (Phil. 2:1).
- E. The circulation of blood in our physical body is also a good picture of the fellowship, the flow of the divine life, in the Body of Christ—cf. Rom. 12:4-5:
 1. Just as the health of our physical body depends on the circulation of our blood, so the health of the Body of Christ depends on the fellowship of the Spirit.
 2. The fellowship of the Body of Christ is simply the circulation, the current, of the Spirit.
 3. The Spirit today is the “blood” in Christ’s Body; if Christ’s Body did not have the Spirit, it would be like a corpse—Eph. 4:4a.
 4. When this all-inclusive Spirit is circulating within the Body of Christ, divinity, humanity, Christ’s person, Christ’s death, and Christ’s resurrection all are circulating—Phil. 1:19.
 5. Calling on the name of the Lord causes the Spirit to circulate within us so that we enjoy all of Christ’s riches—Rom. 10:12; Neh. 8:10.

II. The fellowship of the Body of Christ is the fellowship of the apostles—the divine fellowship between all the believers and the Triune God—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3:

- A. The fellowship of the apostles is based upon the apostles’ teaching; the teaching is the element and the realm of the fellowship.
- B. Teaching is the unveiling of God’s New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church; fellowship is the communion and communication between the believers in their communion and communication with God the Father and Christ the Son.
- C. To be in the fellowship of the apostles is to put aside our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God’s purpose.
- D. The fellowship of the apostles is the fellowship for the Lord’s unique recovery:

1. The Lord desires to recover Christ as everything to us—1 Cor. 1:9.
2. The Lord desires to recover the oneness of the Body of Christ—John 17:11, 21-23; Eph. 4:3.
3. The Lord desires to recover the functioning of all the members of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 14:4b, 26, 31.

III. There is the need today for the fellowship among the churches; this fellowship is to keep the universal oneness of the Body of Christ—John 17:11b, 20-23; Eph. 4:3-6:

- A. The trouble in the churches today is due to the shortage of the fellowship, the circulation of the blood; this lack of fellowship gives the enemy the opportunity to come in.
- B. If any part of the Body of Christ is separate, that part will eventually die; the best way to stay healthy is to “receive more blood and to give more blood,” that is, to stay in the fellowship, the circulation of life:
 1. The circulation of blood within our body carries nourishment to every part of our body and also causes our body to be cherished; in like manner, the fellowship in the Body nourishes us with the riches of Christ and cherishes us with the presence of Christ as the Spirit.
 2. The circulation of blood within our body is like a river that always carries away the waste in our being so that it can be discharged; in like manner, the fellowship in the Body carries away all the negative things.
- C. The local churches are many in different localities; the Body of Christ as the church, the unique universal church, is expressed through the local churches—Rev. 1:11.
- D. The local churches are locally kept away from one another by their being in different localities, but they are not divided universally.
- E. The local churches should fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ:
 1. Any local church that does not keep this universal fellowship of the Body of Christ is divisive and becomes a local sect.
 2. A church is one that remains in the Body; a sect is a group of believers who divide themselves from the Body.
- F. Every local church should receive all kinds of genuine believers in Christ—Rom. 14:1-6; 15:1-7.
- G. A believer can be kept away from the fellowship of a local church, that is, the fellowship of the Body of Christ, because of only three things:
 1. The first thing is being divisive, making divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the apostles’ teaching—Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10.
 2. The second thing is being heretical, denying that Christ came in the flesh (denying Christ’s person in His humanity and denying His redemptive work)—2 John 7-11.
 3. The third thing is the committing of gross sins and living in these sins, not being willing to repent of them and forsake them—1 Cor. 5:9-13; cf. 2 Cor. 2:5-11.