

*I have to deal with people who are moving away from our Fellowship. It is common that they speak dismissively or derisively about “The Fellowship.” Would be good for us to examine the idea of Fellowship.*

**I. FELLOWSHIP IS SPIRITUAL FATHERS**

A. A great mistake is to view what we are a part of as an organization

1. A giant heartless machine with many ancient rules

a. *Politics...usually meaning ulterior motives from men seeking position or glory*

b. *Out of touch men who don't really understand what people in another place are facing*

B. Fellowship has been built by spiritual Fathers

1. *VI My Son...connected in relationships*

a. Men who make decisions because they care about people

2. A price has been paid for what we have *2 Timothy 2:3 (ESVS) Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

a. Paul has been fighting and paying price *V9 for which I am suffering...*

3. Those who have gone before, and fought battles for our “mutual benefit”

a. *Accusation: Leaders are bitter because of past violations & should let it go*

1. No: We've learned the hard way – we want to help & protect others

**II. FELLOWSHIP IS PATTERNS OF WISDOM**

A. Fellowship involves pattern

1. Templates or blueprints that help us to know how to build – how not to build

a. *Exodus 25:40 And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.*

2. There are reasons for everything we do – and the way that we do them

a. Often out of damage that was done when we didn't do it like this!

B. Human nature wants to turn away from pattern

1. Pride rises: I know better/I have a brain/those old guys didn't know what they were talking about

2. Expediency enters in: Men who don't want to pay the price – look for easier ways

a. *Proverbs 22:28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which your fathers have set*

1. when you don't understand why – you're more likely to change things

3. We are called to build according to patterns of Fellowship

a. *2 Timothy 1:13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*

b. *2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

c. *2 Thess 2.15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

d. *2 Timothy 1:14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*

1. Paul has fought for what he entrusts to Timothy: Don't break faith!

C. We should take note of those who turn away from Fellowship patterns

1. *2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*

a. They will be a danger to you – or to others/to the Fellowship

**III. FELLOWSHIP IS MUTUAL OBLIGATION**

A. Common to these men is irritation at being challenged when they begin to make changes...

1. *What's the big deal/making a big fuss/must be some ulterior motive*

a. Not understanding that what we do affects others – it affects us all!

2. We are interconnected relationally

a. There will be friends/family in others churches/in our churches...

b. An example is set: Churches join in outreach/revivals/conferences

1. *Examples are set/confusion sets in*

B. Our decisions/our Spirit must always keep others in mind

1. *2 Tim. 2.10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

a. It's not about me – it's about the destiny of the people of God

2. *Phillipians 1.27 (NLT) Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one Spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the gospel.*

a. Being of one mind for the purpose of fighting together with our spiritual father(s) for the extension of the gospel