

# Accountability, Part 1

*You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*

**Matt. 22.39 (Jesus is repeating Lev. 19.18)**

## THE PROBLEM OF FELLOWSHIP

Many people misunderstand the true meaning of fellowship. They assume it means:

- merely being in the same room together
- playing together and having lots of fun
- having sentimental feeling toward one another

This definition of fellowship is common among believers. Churches have “fellowship” after their services, meet in the “fellowship hall,” and have “fellowship dinners.” This kind of fellowship may mean nothing more than togetherness, socialisation, and fun. Unfortunately, this results in shallow relationships because it does not require any form of accountability.

To make matters worse, this comfortable type of fellowship can take priority over reaching those who do not know Jesus. Believers develop a pattern of social interaction with their Christian friends, and they may enjoy it so much that they may never get around to sharing the Good News with people who are far from God.

Our Heavenly Father challenges us to think differently about fellowship. The Bible word for fellowship is *koinonia* which is better translated partnership or cooperation.

## THREE LEVELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Jesus commands us to “love your neighbour as yourself.” The greatest expression of love among His disciples is for them to hold one another mutually accountable to love and obey God. Effective disciples learn to express accountability on three levels:

- 1 **Accountability begins with an attitude of mutual *submission* toward one another.**

**EPH. 5:21** *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

- 2 **Accountability is demonstrated through acts of *servanthood*.**

**MARK 9:35** *If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.*

- 3 **Accountability usually involves some measure of *personal sacrifice*.**

**1 JOHN 3.16** *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

When disciples are accountable to one another and work cooperatively toward a common goal they achieve *koinonia*, a true sense of fellowship or partnership in the Kingdom. They grow even closer when they suffer together from the aggression of a common enemy (Php. 3.7-12).

- ? In Acts 1-4, how did believers express these three levels of accountability to one another? What was the result?

At this point hand out two copies of this lesson sheet to each participant. Let them practise teaching one another what you just taught them.

When we gather, we build *accountability* to one another by taking time to **REPORT & CELEBRATE**. This includes sharing how we have obeyed Jesus, discussing problems, caring for one another, and worship.

*Use your own stories to teach these points.*

## ASSIGNMENTS

OBEY at least one thing you learned from this lesson or your study of Acts.

SHARE the gospel message with at least one person over the next week.

STUDY Acts 5-8.

WRITE what God is teaching you, using the *Acts Worksheet* (handout).

TRAIN at least one other believer outside this group, just as you were trained.