

FELLOWSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Memory Verse

Acts 2:46

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.."

1. What was the second thing listed in this verse that members of the early church devoted themselves to? (Acts 2:42)
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It is important for us to understand what fellowship really is. It is far more than hanging out at a church dinner talking about sports (fun as that is!). Fellowship is a sharing of our lives together in real relationship with believers as a result of our partnership together in the gospel. Fellowship requires more than casual conversation and acquaintanceship. It is continually developing godly friendship and brotherhood as we grow in God and serve Him alongside one another.

2. What are we to share with other believers? (1 Thessalonians 2:8)
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3. Why did Paul ask the Roman church to pray he would be able to come to them? (Romans 15:31-32)
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4. Why did Paul long to see the Roman believers? (Romans 1:11-12)
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When we truly fellowship with one another, we are strengthened and equipped to love and serve the Lord and complete the mission He has given us.

5. Why are we to meet together regularly? (Hebrews 10:25)
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6. What are we to do for each other? (Hebrews 10: 24)
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7. What was Paul's reaction when fellow believers visited him during the time he was under house arrest in Rome? (Acts 28:14-15)
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8. What should we be careful that our speech does for other Christians? (Ephesians 4:29)
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9. What does God say about the importance of other members of the body of Christ to us? (1 Corinthians 12:14-15, 21, 26)

10. What are we commanded to do as we have opportunity? (Galatians 6:10)

11. What two things are we to do along with our fellow believers? (II Timothy 2:22)

12. What new command did Jesus give us? (John 13:34)

13. What will be the result of us obeying this command? (John 13:34)

One way God has given us to flee sin and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace is the practice of accountability. Accountability takes place when believers share openly and honestly their struggles with temptation and/or sin with an individual believer or a small group of believers.

Those we choose as accountability partners should have certain character qualities. They should be trustworthy and committed to confidentiality (except in cases where confidentiality could result in harm to the confessing believer or to other people—in such cases both people involved should take the issue to pastoral leadership in the church). They should be kind, not condemning. At the same time, they must lovingly challenge us to turn away completely and forever from our sin. Your accountability partner(s) should *always* be people of the same sex unless you choose to make your spouse your accountability partner.

Accountability is not a complaint session, a pity party, or an attempt to make us feel better about our sin. It is not a time of punishment, belittling or rejection either. It is a time we share our struggles and encourage, challenge and guide each other to freedom from sin in Christ, and pray for one another. The purpose of accountability is neither to wound those who have sinned nor to give them excuses to remain in sin, but rather to restore those that have fallen and help them walk in obedience and freedom.

14. What happens to the man who hides his sin? (Proverbs 28:13)

15. What happens to the man who confesses and renounces his sin? (Proverbs 28:13)

16. What command does James give us along these lines? (James 5:16)

17. Why does he give us that command? (James 5:16)

It is true that only God can absolve and forgive our sins, and we are to confess them to Him (see 1 John 1:9). But there may be times when believers find themselves stuck in a pattern of sin that they cannot get free from. In such times confessing our sins to a brother or sister in Christ (which is sometimes far more humbling than confessing to God, who is invisible) is the method God gives us to be set free from the practice of that sin. Something supernatural takes place as we confess our sins to one another and pray for each other that breaks the power of besetting sin.

18. If you are too proud or embarrassed to confess your sins to a trusted believing friend, what truth must you consider? (1 Peter 5:5b-6)

19. What does God say about temptation? (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Some believers are absolutely terrified to admit their struggles with temptation or sin, thinking that if they confess their struggle or sin to someone they will be completely rejected. Since temptations are common to all people, it is likely the person you confess your struggle to will not think the less of you because he or she has probably dealt with the same thing to some degree. Such confession is one of the ways out of temptation and failure that God provides for us. It is far better to humble yourself in private to a trusted brother or sister and receive grace to walk in freedom than it is to keep your sin hidden and remain or become a slave (which will probably eventually result in far more people finding out about your sin anyway.)

20. How are we to treat a brother or sister who is caught in a sin? (Galatians 6:1)

Ecclesiastes 4:10-12 give us a biblical picture of the strength and safety that comes from accountability. Read these verses and answer the following questions.

21. What is the danger of remaining isolated and by ourselves if we are struggling with sin?

22. What is the threefold cord that is not quickly broken?
