

Day 18

Matthew 18.20

James 5.16a

1 Corinthians 12.25

Day 18- Experiencing Life Together

Real fellowship is not just getting together and hanging out. It can start with that, and building friendships is important, but real fellowship goes deeper. Real fellowship involves sharing. Sharing is simply giving and receiving. You tell about yourself and find out about others. You talk about what is difficult for you and find out the same for them. Fellowship can be sharing mistakes you've made, things that make you happy, where you feel you are with your individual relationship with God, and many other things. One of the best questions I've ever been asked was, "What is your biggest temptation?"

Now, obviously you don't want to share this stuff with everyone. That is why we meet in smaller groups within the big church. Smaller is better. In my experience, an ideal group would be between two and nine people. Ultimately, it is best when each person gets to and has to talk about what is going on. That is the fellowship that God wants for our lives.

Here are some things to look for in real fellowship. Authenticity. People get honest and share things they wouldn't normally share. If you share something that you are afraid will change someone's opinion of you, that is authenticity. Mutuality. When we need and depend on each other. When we first truly share, we will fear that the other person will leave us or tell others what we said. Once we truly trust each other not to leave, we begin to depend upon each other and grow in fellowship. Sympathy. We learn to feel what others are feeling, which helps us understand them and know better how to help. Mercy. When we truly build fellowship, we learn not to judge each other by our difficulties and mistakes, but learn to help each other through them and keep from repeating them. Mercy is not ignoring the mistakes; mercy is not connecting someone's value with their mistakes.

True fellowship takes time and effort. Don't be disappointed if it doesn't develop right away, or when you share your first struggle. But know that it is worth the effort, and that without it our lives will never have complete purpose.

Thinking about my purpose:

Know. I need others in my life.

Remember. "Share each others troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ." - Galatians 6.2 (NLT)

Think about it. What is something I can do today to connect with another believer in one of the ways listed above?