

# KEEPING OUR BALANCE

## *Fellowship*

# INTRODUCTION

## AIMS :

- **To dig beneath the outdated definition of the word 'fellowship' and find the riches that are buried within!**
- **To be challenged by the early church to re-discover the joy that comes through a united, loving community.**

## OPENER

How would you describe the word 'fellowship' to someone who asked what it means in a church context?

Why do you think it may have become outmoded in some church circles?

## PRAY

That God would get you excited once again about belonging to the family of God. Pray that as people visit our church, they are attracted by our fellowship with one another and our commitment to one another.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to infuse our church with a spirit of unity and love.

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# BIBLE STUDY



## Intro

You may have read the book or watched the film that is part JRR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trio called 'The Fellowship of the Ring'.

In this film, fellowship is seen as a brotherhood, a group drawn together by a common goal, committed to one another even to the point of sacrifice.

**This idea of fellowship is one that the early Church would have understood**



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# BIBLE STUDY



### **Read: Acts 2 : 42 - 47**

- This whole section is entitled 'the fellowship of the believers' in some versions of the Bible. Fellowship is specifically mentioned as one of the activities of the first Christians in **verse 42**. What do you take it to mean here? What strikes you most about the early Christians?
- **Look at verses 44-45**. This is more than a casual bumping into each other each Sunday. How would you describe the relationship these people had with each other?

### **Now look at verse 47**

This is a church that was growing quickly. We often think that to initiate church growth, we need to go from the church to outsiders. But what do you think was happening here?

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### Read: John 13 : 34-35

Jesus asked us to model our allegiance to him through our love for one another.

- How might the love we have for each other as believers go deeper than the affection you may experience in other groups?
- In which ways do you think we can live as 21st century disciples which show those outside the church who we follow?

LOVE ONE  
ANOTHER



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# GOING DEEPER

**In The Purpose-Driven Church,  
Rick Warren says this about fellowship:**

*'The Bible is very clear that following Christ is not just a matter of believing – it also includes belonging.'*

*'The Christian life is **not** a solo act. We are meant to live in relationship with each other'*

- Thinking about this, the verses from Acts, and what you heard on Sunday, what does the church provide through fellowship? Why is it so important to be intentional in this area?
- The Greek word translated as 'koinonia' is used in the New Testament to describe the very special community relationship between Christians. It has been said that our danger is catching 'koinonitis' – developing such a close-knit fellowship that newcomers are afraid or unable to break into it. Is this something you have experienced? How can we strive against this happening?
- What do you find most challenging about the idea of belonging in this very committed way to each other at Emmanuel?

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**PRAY**

Commit your thoughts, challenges and conversations from today into God's hands and ask him to sink his word into your heart as you actively seek to deepen your relationships with the church family where he has placed you.

