

DOING LIFE TOGETHER MATTERS

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 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, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

- ❖ God has INVITED each of us to be a part of HIS FAMILY.
His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)
 - **KEY TRUTH:** God CREATED us to be a part of His family.
God is the one who made all things, and all things are for His glory. He wanted to have many children share His glory... Hebrews 2:10a (NCV)
- ❖ The Bible calls being a part of God's family FELLOWSHIP.
We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3 (NIV)
 - **KEY TRUTH:** Fellowship is LOVING God's FAMILY.
The person who loves God must also love other believers. 1 John 4:21 (GW)

I'm writing... so you'll know how to live in the family of God. That family is the church... 1 Timothy 4:21 (NCV)
- ❖ There are Four Levels or FOUR "-SHIPS" of Fellowship
 1. **LEVEL 1:** First step is MEMBER-ship – choosing to BELONG.
You are members of God's very own family... and you belong in God's household with every other Christian. Ephesians 2:19 (LB)
 - **KEY TRUTH:** BAPTISM is the outward expression of our fellowship.
This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized. Each of us is now a part of His resurrection Body. 1 Corinthians 12:13 (MSG)
 2. **LEVEL 2:** The next step is FRIEND-ship – learning to SHARE.
All the believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other. Acts 2:44 (LB)
 - Sharing our EXPERIENCES.
People learn from one another... as iron sharpens iron. Proverbs 27:17 (NIV)
 - Sharing our HOMES.

Open your homes to each other.

1 Peter 4:9 (NCV)

▪ **Sharing our PROBLEMS.**

Share each others troubles and problems.

Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

➤ **KEY TRUTH: LIFEGROUPS** are how we **PRACTICE** fellowship.

Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25

3. **LEVEL 3: The next step is PARTNER-ship – doing my PART.**

The whole Body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole Body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)

➤ **KEY TRUTH: MINISTRY** is how we practice fellowship.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

4. **LEVEL 4: The highest level is KIN-ship – loving believers like FAMILY.**

We know what real love is because Christ gave up His life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters.

1 John 3:16 (NLT)

➤ **KEY TRUTH: LOVE** for one another is how we **DEMONSTRATE** fellowship.

"This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples – when they see the love you have for each other."

John 13:35 (MSG)

❖ **CONCLUSION: How can I be a part of God's family? Just ASK HIM!**

Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.

Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Romans 10:13