

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP:

Reaching Out to Others

OBJECT:

To help students look beyond their personal desires to reach out and accept others.

I. Christian Fellowship

A. Definition: relationship in which people have something in common

B. As Christians, what do we have in common?

C. If we have Christ in common, how should that impact our relationships? (Phil. 2:1-2)
(Get along with each other, love each other, work together with one heart and purpose)

D. What hinders Christian fellowship? (Phil. 2:3-5)

- 1) Selfishness v. 3a
- 2) Vain conceit: living only to impress others v. 3b
- 3) Thinking too highly of yourself v. 3c
- 4) Not caring about others v. 4
- 5) Bad attitude v. 5

E. The example of Christ (Phil 2:5-8)

- 1) How was Christ's attitude described in Phil. 2:6-8? (Humble, obedient servant)
- 2) Who was Christ thinking about when He went to the cross?
- 3) When you attend Connections, who are you thinking about? Are you looking for ways to encourage others?

4) ILLUSTRATION

A number of years ago, our college ministry was really struggling. When I would ask students why they didn't attend, they would say they were busy and they were doing okay with God on their own, and already had Christian friends. During that same time, Phil came into my office during the week with spiritual questions. He attended NMC and someone told him that if you wanted to know what the Bible said to come to EBCC. He was a homosexual and wanted to know what the Bible taught about it. Over the next several hours, I was able to share the Scriptures with him, and he became a Christian. I counseled him that he needed to stop hanging out with his homosexual friends and develop new friends. If he didn't, he wouldn't make it as a Christian, and he agreed. He desperately needed to become part of a community of believers who could love him, encourage him, teach him, and befriend him. He found only a little of this at EBCC at the time. He began to attend EBCC but he struggled. He eventually had to move downstate. The day he was to move, he came and saw me and told me he had just found out he had HIV. Too often, we think FSM is all about me and getting my needs met and we forget it is also about meeting the needs of others. For Phil, it could have made the difference of life or death.

II. What Needs To Be True if FSM is to Demonstrate True Christian Fellowship? (Romans 12:9-16)

A. We need to love each other. Rom. 12:9

What do you need to do if you don't really like the people in the group?

Realize that love is an act of the will therefore we can love them even if we don't feel like it. Romans 12 comes after Romans 1-11 that remind us of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross for us not because he felt like it but because He loved us and was being obedient to His Father.

B. We need to not only love one another, we need to express it. Rom. 12:10. How?

1. By saying "I love you." Writing notes of encouragement.
2. By our actions 1 John 3:17-18
3. Helping others Hebrews 6:10
4. Exhort (1 Thess. 5:14); speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)
5. Forgiving each other (Eph. 4:32)

C. We need to be looking for people who we can reach out to (Rom. 12:10b)

(There should never be a time when people come to FSM and no one talks to them.)

What are meaningful ways that people have reached out to you?

C. We need to encourage each other to be growing in Christ. (Rom. 12:11; Rom. 1:11, 12)

What are ways that you could practically do that?

D. We need to meet each others' needs as we are able. (Rom. 12:13)

E. We need to care how other people feel (Rom. 12:15)

~Rejoice with them when good happens

~Be sad when bad happens

F. We must not ever think we are too cool to be friends with someone (Problem with cliques). Rom. 12:16

APPLICATION

- 1) When you come to FSM, is it all about you and getting your needs met or are you intentionally looking for ways that you can encourage others?
- 2) What changes will you make so you can make a difference in FSM?
- 3) Is there someone you need to befriend and invite over?
- 4) Is there someone you don't like and you look down on? Will you repent and make it a point to be kind to them?

SMALL GROUPS

Read the scenario, "On the Outside Looking In" and discuss the questions.

ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

The youth group was really different - not at all like the group Ann had belong to back home. Ann and her mother had moved when her parents divorced, because Ann's mother wanted to be closer to her family for support. So here she was. It was her fourth Sunday visiting Eastside Church. A "visit", because Ann hadn't yet felt like part of the group. Her mom knew several people in the church, but Ann was getting the feeling that she would never get to know anyone. Did she have leprosy or what? The students in the group were nothing like the ones in her old youth group. In fact, they were just as cold as the kids at her new school.

There was Scott. He was only interested in impressing the girls. He would do whatever he could to get their attention.

Then there was Stacey. She was either combing her hair or checking her makeup all the time.

Tom sat in the corner all along. People at school called him a "loner". The church kids ignored him, but he didn't seem to care.

Then there were Marcie, Tricia, and Kim. All they seemed to care about was each other. From the beginning to the end of college group, they talked nonstop. Whenever someone else would try to talk to them, they would say "hi" and then basically ignore them.

Karen ... well, Karen always kept her nose in the Bible. She wanted a deeper Bible study, and was so involved with her Bible that she forgot about people.

Most of the people in the group acted as if they didn't want to be at youth group, but their parents made them attend.

- < If you were Ann, what would you do? What would you say to the rest of the group? To your mother?
- < Is there a difference between the students at school and the kids at youth group?
- < How could this youth group have made Ann feel a part of it?
- < Is there anything wrong with having a certain group of friends you enjoy being around more than others?
- < If you are a Christian, should everyone be an equal friend?