



Titus 3:12-15

Truth #10 - We need Christian fellowship

Doctrine #10 - The doctrine of fellowship through Christ

Principle #10 - Fellowship requires practice and learning

There are risks associated with learning to trust others. But like any investment, the reward is commensurate to its risk. Developing deep trusting friendships requires t _ _ e, t _ _ _ l, and t _ _ _ _ _ y. Christian fellowship is much more than just friendship but it is never less than friendship.

1. Read and ponder First John 1:7 and consider what enables Christian fellowship.

The New Testament describes the connection between believers as being *closer* than blood-relatives (refer to Matthew 12:50, Luke 8:21). The relationship of believers is described in *kinship* language.

2. What kind of kinship language is used to describe the relationships between Christians in First Timothy 5:1-2?

The description of believers as kin is known as *fictive kinship* which describes a relationship closer than that of blood relatives. But, Dr. David deSilva states that the fictive kinship relationships of believers is a blood relationship because every believer is connected with each other through the blood of Christ (1John 1:7).

3. Based on what we have just discussed, what kind of relationship with the two men mentioned in Titus 3:12 must the Apostle Paul had? Explain.
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It seems that these either of these two men were coming to replace Titus.

4. What did Paul want Titus to do? (Not just *where* but *how*?) (Titus 3:12)
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This verse (Titus 3:12) also gives us a glimpse into how Paul led. He made a *decision*. The reason this is so significant is that it gives us an insight into how the Apostle Paul walked in the will of God. This didn't involve him waiting around for some 'word from God'. Rather, he simply made a *decision* based on his wisest option. This is not to say that the Apostle Paul was never directed by the Holy Spirit to change his course. But it does mean that Paul's usual way of making decisions was *wisdom* not *whim*.

5. What obligation did Paul instruct Titus to present to the believers in Crete regarding two travelling preachers? (Titus 3:13)
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6. In the context of what Paul wanted the Cretans to do in Titus 3:13, what might the form of "good works" and "cases of urgent need" have taken as described in Titus 3:14?
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The Doctrine of Fellowship Through Christ

The Epistle to Titus reveals just how relational the Apostle Paul was. He clearly loved and trusted Titus. He has demonstrated his great concern for the Cretans. He has made it clear that he had built relationships with several other ‘sons in the faith’ including Artemis and Tychicus and that he had several peer friendships including with Zenas the lawyer and Apollos the preacher.

7. How does Romans 12:5 reveal the reason that each believer is connected?

Christian fellowship is a connection that believers have with each other because they are each connected to Christ. Fellowship may simply be time spent with another person or other persons. But *Christian* fellowship is where believers in Christ draw closer to Christ *because* of what they do with their time together.

8. What kinds of things can believers intentionally do together to be truly *fellowshipping*? Discuss.

Fellowship Requires Practice and Learning

We must not be under any illusions that genuine Christian community and fellowship is *difficult*. It involves disappointments, offences, and learning to forgive and reconcile.

9. What (difficult) guidelines does Paul give for implementing Christian fellowship in Colossians 3:12-14?

10. How would you explain these guidelines to a new Christian?

Prayer

Lord God,

Draw us closer together. Fill us with Your love and help us to share it with each other. Grant us the grace to forgive when we are wronged, hurt, and disappointed. Enable us Oh God to be a brother/sister to our brothers and sisters in Christ. In Jesus' Name we pray,

Amen.