

HC 55- Fellowship Among The Saints

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: When you hear that we will have “a time of fellowship after worship” do you instantly think of cake and coffee, or cookie and juice, if you’re a child? If you do, then I must remind you that that is one of the tiniest parts of fellowship or communion of the saints. Today we want to take some time in God’s Words to hear his instruction regarding Fellowship or Communion of the Saints.

Our headings are: **The Fact: All Saints have gifts to help each other**, and **The Act: All Saints must use their gifts to help each other**.

Our goals are: That you will **learn to develop the gifts God has given to you so that you can (and desire to) use them for the benefit of the saints**.

55 Q. WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY “THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS”?

A. First, that believers one and all, as members of this community, share in Christ and in all his treasures and gifts. Second, that each member should consider it his duty to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members.

The Fact: All Saints have Gifts to help each other

1. God gives each of his children gifts. You are joined in spirit with the Lord and you receive his gifts. (1Corinthians 6:17).

Romans 8: 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also **freely give us all things?**

Of course you know that “all things” doesn’t mean “all things.” God doesn’t give us “all things.” Rather, God gives “all kinds of things.” You were reconciled to the Father through his Only-Begotten Son. God is now your adopted Father and you, his child. If you forget that you gift is from the Father through Jesus Christ, you will become arrogant in using it, or you will want to take the credit when God uses your gift to accomplish something good. If you help someone move, you will want to take the credit. If you children turn out to be good, you will want praise. If you understand that you are God’s child, you will **praise him** for **using you** to do good.

2. God has blessed his church with a diversity of gifts. God gives a diversity of gifts because his church has a diversity 多样的 of needs. IOW: There is not an area of need where God has not given a gift to meet that need.

1Corinthians 12: 4 **There are diversities of gifts**, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there **are diversities of activities**, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the **manifestation** 表明, 表现 **of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:**

1Peter 4:10 As **each one has received a gift**, minister it to one another, as good stewards 仆人的 of the manifold 多种 grace of God.

3. All the gifts God has given to you, you must use wisely. Don’t misuse or ignore those gifts.

1Corinthians 12:14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

4. Consider some example of how a Christian might misuse the gifts his God has graciously given to him:

a. I know a father who made his young children sit through more than 2 hours of Bible research every night.

b. Sometimes a person doesn’t want to hear a lecture from you; he just wants you to listen or give him a hug. So the one who lectures him on the solution to his problem is not being a blessing to him. You may have the gift of teaching, but the person’s need is for you to listen. To talk when you should listen is to abuse the gift of teaching.

c. All parts of Christ’s body are to be in perfect proportion 比例 Anything abnormally large is part dangerous. The head must be big, but not too big, for example. No one should act like he were too important to the church.

d. I have a tendency to try to think whether I can do another person’s job. Then reality sets in. A job might seem easy but it isn’t. You don’t want me to do your foot surgery...or recovery might be much longer. And you wouldn’t go to your dentist for marriage counseling.

1Corinthians 12:29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

This means there must be no room for arrogance or ego 自我

The Act: All Saints must use their gifts to help each other

1. Why must all saints use their gifts to help each other? What is their motivation? You love Jesus Christ and you want to see his church grow. You love your neighbor and you want to see him glorify Jesus Christ. So you bless him with your gifts.

1Corinthians 13: 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow 赐给 all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

2. Trouble comes when people want the flamboyant 华丽的 gifts (like being evangelists and authors) and ignore other needed gifts. Keep in mind that God has not given all gifts to all men. If you try to take a gift that God has not given to you, you will either fall flat on your face or you will cause harm to the church of Jesus Christ.

1Corinthians 12: 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And **those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,** 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism 分裂 in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer...

So **accept** whatever gift God has given to you. Don't be covetous 贪婪的

3. You must humbly use your gift. Some are reluctant to use lesser, but necessary gifts, while others can become boastful of their gifts. God therefore warns against this type of complacency 自满

Philippians 2: 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient...

4. What kind of gifts can you use? Let's get practical. Consider some from Romans 12.

Romans 12: 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; **7 or ministry**, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts 劝告, 告诫 in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

a. **Prophecy.** This is not referring to foretelling the future. "Prophecy" refers to any announcing of truth—as in teaching the Gospel.

b. **Ministry.** This gift is specifically being to refer to the work of the deacons. (The root word is "diaokonia.") He will persevere even when he is tired, and he will find it hard to say "no" to those who are in desperate straits 绝境.

c. **Teaching.** Teaching is to instruct in truths. This is a distinct gift, but not a different office from prophesying. The teacher will work from Word to Life in his teaching. He will always double check the facts he presents as truth. He will be passionate about his work.

d. **Exhorting.** Exhorting is to encourage and correct. Exhorting includes counseling 规劝... and encouraging spiritual growth. The exhorter will want to see actions and to set goals for those he is

counseling. The exhorter will be irritated 忿怒 when actions are missing and won't hesitate 迟疑 to rebuke 训斥 those who are rejecting his exhortation.

e. Giving - Acts of charity must be common to all the members of Christ's church. Yes, you are to liberally contribute to the relief of the poor. This word "liberally" is used to mean "without prejudice 偏见." This means Christians are to give without care of the person's race, age, looks, or social position. If the person were needy, help him. And give with joy. But the giving-one starts with giving his own things. He is not like Liberals today who are always liberal with other people's money. (Liberals give less to charities.) He will motivate others to give. He will praise God when his needs are met. He will be frugal 节俭 with how he spends the Lord's money.

f. Leading. This term usually refers to those who help the pastor in church leadership. It could be deacons or elders. A leader warns, but he also leads by example. (This is very important; he doesn't just talk.) A good leader delegates 代表 responsibilities. He teaches others to fish rather than given them a fish everyday. A leader holds the congregation together in love and discipline.

g. Showing mercy. This is the one who visits the sick with a smile...who prepares a meal with a pleasant face... This person makes the visit or the assistance more meaningful and joyful. Vincent: Let the "visitor be a sunbeam 阳光 penetrating 穿透 into the sick-chamber 病房, and to the heart of the afflicted 倍受折磨的."

5. You may have to develop your gifts. For example: If you have the gift of teaching, you have to get training to develop your teaching skills and doctrinal knowledge. God could give you perfect ready-to use-gifts, but he knows that that can make you lazy.

6. You may not demand others use their gifts for you, like one man who demanded that others pay for his diabetic tablets. You have to do what is good for others...

7. There is no room for: Dictators, hesitators, agitators, or spectators...Unity must become clear.

Conclusion:

God graciously gave his adopted children all the gifts they need to work together in his holy household. As Christians you are members individually and yet of one body. You need others. Not Tomasian Christian – absent at an important time from church. He expects that they will use all those gifts without any confusion for the good of each member and ultimately for the glory of her husband, her Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The goal of communion of the saints is the glorifying of the whole body (Ephesians 4:12). This glorifying of the body leads to the glorifying of the head, who is Jesus Christ. Do you find yourself saying: What is yours in mine and what is mine is mine? That is not how the body of Christ works. You share with each other for the greater good. On the other hand, do you act so big that you don't have time for others? A good Christian child will always put others first. Jesus put you first. Follow his example.

Finally, God equips his children with everything they need. But it is not just the blessings that you will receive from the Lord that you should want to be his children. You should want to be his child because without being his child you will face eternity in hell. He offers salvation to all who would sincerely come to him and plead for his grace.