

# **Relations amongst Brothers and Sisters**

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when  
brothers dwell in unity!*

*(Psalm 133:1)*



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## Relations amongst Brothers and Sisters

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Col 3:12-17)

It is to be expected that the world reject and neglect this word. The problem is that even at the church, the observance of many of these commandments seem to be a burden for some.

Look at the following texts: Joh 13-14; Rom 12:10; 15:14; Gal 5:13; 6:2; Eph 5:21; Col 3:13,16; 1 The 5:11; Jam 4:11; 5:16.

It is a high standard, however, possible in the Lord. It is appropriate then, before considering the requirements for the relationship in the church, know the nature of this relation. It is necessary, first, to know and believe in all that God has done for us and in us (Gal 2:20), and then fulfill what He requires of us. Thus, "His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Joh 5:3).



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For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1Jn 5:3)

## The Nature of Our Relation

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (1Co 10:17)

The bond that unites the church making it "one unique body", "one unique bread" (1Co 10:17) is spiritual (2Co 5:16). Similarly, the principles that determine the relationships in the church are not carnal, on the contrary, appeal to the new nature we receive: A heavenly nature (Joh 3:6, 1Co 15:45-49, 2Co 5:17, Jam 1:18, 1Pe 1:23). This is foolishness to the world, but for us it is God's power and wisdom (1Co 1:21-24).

### a. We are Member of One Another

We were called to come "to share in Christ" (Heb 3:14).

We are members of his body, that is, of himself (1Co 6:17; 12:12-13, Eph 1:22-23, 5:30). We are in Christ. In consequence of our union with Christ we are members of one another (Eph 4:25, Rom 12:5). We can not partake of Christ without partaking of others who are united to Christ (1Co 10:16-17; 11:29, 12:25).



*The bond that unites the church making it one unique body is spiritual.*

### b. We are Brothers and Sisters

We are children of the same Father (Joh 1:12-13, Rom 8:16-17, Gal 3:26-28, 4:6-7, Eph 1:5, 1Jn 3:1). We have a different nature from the world (1Jn 3:10, 4:5-6, Joh 8:38-44; 3:6; Col 1:13). Those who are born from God resemble Jesus Christ, his son, forming with him a unique and large family (Rom 8:28-29, Eph 1:3-5, 3:15), having his joy in imitating the works of the Father (Eph 5:1) as Jesus, the older brother did (Joh 5:19; 15:10).

## The Basis of Love

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. (1Jn 4:7)

Above all things "... LOVE ..." Why? Because "does not seek its own interests" (1Co 13:5, translated from PJFA\*). The practice of love reveals the knowledge of God (1Jn 4:7,8,11,21). Everything we do have no value unless it is motivated in love (1Co 13:1-3, 16:14).

Without love there is no holiness (1Th 3:12-13). Love is the commandment that distinguishes the disciples of Jesus (John 13:34-35, Eph 5:1-2, 1Jn 3:16). The exercise of love eliminates conflicts (1Co 10:31-33; 1Co 13; Gal 5:13-14).

\* "Does not insist on its own way" (1Co 13:5, ESV)

## **Solving Conflicts**

Through our weaknesses, both ours as our brothers', conflicts arise among us affecting our fellowship. Let's look at some situations that generate conflicts and the solutions from the Lord for each case:

### **a. If You Sin**

There must be confession and restitution:

- . The confession must be clear and complete. Confessing is not asking for forgiveness. It is to say with our mouth what we have done. We acknowledge sin and not explain or justifying it.
- . The confession must be done in humility and repentance. As deep as our sin should be as well our shame, our pain. Must be such breakthrough that leads us to turn away from sin.
- . The confession must be done with restitution where necessary and possible (Luk 19:8; Lev 6:2-5). We must repay the robbed one, clarify the lie, return the honor of whom it was taken, assuming the consequences of our sin.
- . The confession must be done without delay. The more we delay, the more it will cost us to confess, moreover, leading us to a hypocritical life (Mat 5:23-26; Psa 32:3; Eph 4:26).
- . The confession must be done covering the entire area of-fended accordingly to the ministry we exercise: a person, group, or congregation which we have sinned against.

- . We must confess our faults to one another (Jam 5:16; 1 Joh 1:5-9). Even when we have not sinned against someone specifically, we must confess to each other to obtain greater deliverance, to walk in the light and even to obtain help in counsel and prayer.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (Jas 5:16)

#### **b. If Your Brother or sister Sins – Mat 18:15-18**

We must remember that each member of the body is responsible for his brethren (1Cor 12:25). All of us, through love, we must care for one another (1Th 5:11,14).

1. What **should** we do when the brethren sin (Lev 19:16-18)?
  - . If someone is caught in a fault (Gal 6:1);
  - . If someone deviates from the truth (Jas 5:19-20);
  - . If anyone sees his brother committing a sin (1Jn 5:16).
2. What we **should not** do (Lev 19:16-18):
  - . Silence and ignore the issue (v.17; Eze 3:18-21);
  - . Silence and hold a grudge and resentment (v.18);
  - . Tell others to go talk to him (Pro 25:9);
  - . Murmur against the brethren (v.16);
  - . Opine without really knowing what happened.

In brief, when we see it, we become responsible. We should always speak directly to the brother or sister, and guide him/her to repent and confess. Assist in the restoration as a guide in order he/she doesn't fall again in error. Transmit faith and grace into his/her heart (Pro 27:6; 28:23; Gal 6:1-2).

#### **c. If Your Brethren Sin Against You – Pro 25:9**

- . Firstly, you must forgive your brethren (Mat 6:12,14-15; Mark 11:25-26; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13). This is an inner deliverance.



- In love, go and rebuke him for his restoration. Not because you want to demand justice done to you, but because you want the well-being of your brother. What you will address is not the fact that he has sinned against you, however, that he has sinned and needs help (Mat 18:15-22).
- We must have wisdom and discernment when we are rebuking our brother, taking into account his weaknesses (Col 3:13-15; 1Co 13:7; Gal 6:1-2).

## **Differences or Opinions – Rom 14**

In this section comes the things that are secondary and there are no clear commandments (uses and customs issues):

- To have a well defined opinion (v.5);
- Not to impose our opinion (v.22);
- Do not judge and despise the brother (v.10);
- Do not argue (v.1);
- Not making them stumble, that is, not to do, before the brethren, what in their opinion is not correct, eg, drinking, eating pork, etc (v.13).

## **Some Practical Advices**

- Fellowship is something reciprocal, depends on both parties. We can be friends of those who are not of Christ, but we can only have true fellowship with those who have the same Spirit we have.
- The initiative must be ours. We should love and not expect to be loved.
- We should not always be with the stronger ones. The weaker ones need us.
- When we get together should not be just to talk trivialities. We must share experiences and talk things that build up.

## Clarifying Doubts

### **a. In case of slander, with whom to fix it?**

- . Should correct with the victim and the people who commented with, even if involving unbelievers.

### **b. What to do when the amount to be retribute is too high?**

- . It must be confessed, willing to bear the consequences, whatever they might be. You can also seek help from the brethren. Always seek guidance with the leaders or elders.

### **c. How to retribute the offended if is dead or we lost contact?**

- . In the first case there is nothing to do but to accept God's forgiveness. At the second one should be ready to fix it in the moment you be with the offended. Should seek to find him.

### **d. How do it with brethren who do not gather with us?**

- . Nothing changes, they are brethren, members of the same body.

### **e. What to do if an unbeliever informs me that a brother has sinned and asks secrecy?**

- . We ought to obey God rather than men. Tell who told you that you will have to confront the one who sinned even without mentioning the source. Is important to ascertain the veracity of the information.

## Conclusion

Fellowship is something that will gradually grow. To the extent that we know each other we grow in love. The goal of Jesus is that we are like the Father and the Son are (Joh 17:20-21).

May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ. (2Th 3:5)