

'Koinonia's' Leadership

Hebrews 13

October 2, 2016

Series: Growing in 'Koinonia'

'Koinonia' Defined: the sharing of our common life from God through Jesus, as we partner and participate in authentic spiritual community ("fellowship").

'Koinonia's' Foundation: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the purpose of restoring joyful fellowship with God and each other (I John 1).

'Koinonia's' Call: 'one another love', as described in the numerous one another commands in the N.T. (Rom. 13:8; John 15:12; I John 3:23).

'Koinonia's' Promises: salvation assurance (I John 3:4; 4:7-8; authentic joy (I John 1:4; John 15:11); powerful witness (Acts 2:42,47; John 13:34-35)

'Koinonia's' Challenge: developing and maintaining healthy fellowship in the midst of differing opinions within the church family (Rom. 14:1 - 15:7)

- Guideline #1 – Let's avoid judging each other;
- Guideline #2 - Let's commit to building up each other;
- Guideline #3 – Let's enthusiastically welcome each other;
- Guideline #4 – Let's practice humble submission to church leadership (Hebrews 13:17).

Hebrews 13:7 – "**Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.**" (ESV)

- "Remember your leaders" –
 - "elders, overseers, pastors" - always plural.
- "those who spoke to you the word of God" –
- "Consider the outcome of their way of life"
- "and imitate their faith" –

Hebrews 13:17 - ***“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy, and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”*** (ESV)

- *“obey your leaders and submit to them” –*
- *“they are keeping watch over your souls” –*
- *“as those who will have to give an account” –*
- *“Let them do this with joy, and not with groaning” –*
- *“for that would be of no advantage to you.”*

The Commands: “Remember, consider, imitate, obey, submit.”

- **Heart-willing obedience:** it’s the key to ‘koinonia’
_____ and _____ in the midst of
diverse opinions on non-doctrinal and non-moral issues.

Supporting Scriptures:

- *“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, ESV)
- *“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching..... Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.”* (1 Timothy 5:17,19-20, ESV)

- *So I exhort the elders among you..... shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” (I Peter 5:1-4)*
- *“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (Paul to Ephesian church elders, Acts 20:28)*

For Personal and/or Small Group Reflection

1. Generally speaking, as you have interacted with church leaders over your years in the church, what have you learned about yourself?
2. In a church that has diverse preferences and opinions on a variety of issues, what role should the church leaders play for the sake of healthy ‘koinonia’?
3. Passages such as I Thessalonians 5:12 and I Timothy 5:17 refer to those who “are over you in the Lord” and those who “rule well”. What do those terms reveal about the role of church leaders? How do we balance that with the “not domineering” statement in I Peter 5:3?
4. Hebrews 13:7 uses three commands in regards to our relationships with “leaders”. What are those commands, and what do they imply about the role of leaders?
5. Hebrews 13:17 speaks of “obeying” and “submitting to” church leaders. What does that mean to you? How does that look in a healthy church?
6. What should you do, biblically, if you disagree with the direction or decisions the church leaders make?
7. What reasons are given in verse 17 for such obedience and submission?
8. Some churches have a reputation of “being hard on pastors”. What do you feel and think about that? According to this text, what would correct that?
9. In light of these scriptures, how should we pray for our elders and pastors? for the new pastor? for our church? for yourself?

