

## Sermon: Mamma Mia – Koinonia!

Text: Acts 2:42-47

### Discussion Questions:

When you hear the word “fellowship,” what comes to your mind?

I grew up as a pastor’s kid - in a Baptist church. Our church building had a “Fellowship Hall.” It had a tile floor and was filled with folding chairs and pressed-wood folding tables that weighed a ton. This was the room where we had our fairly frequent pot-luck dinners. Being the selfish little kid that I was, I would try to push to the front of the line to try to get the pizza slices and KFC chicken before it was all gone (fighting off all the other little kids whose parents made them be there!).

That’s what I think of when I think of fellowship. The dictionary defines it as “friendly association.” I see it as a rather “old-fashioned” word (Does anyone under the age of 30 “fellowship”? The preferred word these days is “community”). It’s pot-luck dinners and standing around talking with a cup of coffee in your hand, and chit-chat - and in the best-case scenarios, it’s friendly association and concern for others.

Some questions I want us to wrestle with today is are:

- Is friendly association and pot-luck dinners what God has in mind when He calls us to experience “Christian Fellowship”?
- Is that the best the family of God has to offer to a broken and divided world?
- Perhaps your experience of Christian fellowship is a positive one. Can you share a story of a time when the church functioned in a positive and effective way in your life - surrounding you with genuine fellowship, community and love?

### Examination:

- Read **Acts 2:42-47**.
  - There is probably no better “definition” of what the church should look like and “be about” than these six verses. What immediately stands out to you about these verses?
  - Why was it important that it was the Apostles who did the teaching (v. 42)?
  - It doesn’t say that they devoted themselves to “the fellowship”; rather, they devoted themselves to “fellowship.” They weren’t devoted to a group or a cause - but they were devoted to an ACTION. The word we translate “fellowship” is the Greek word *Koinonia*. Have you ever heard this word before - and if so, what’s your sense of this word? What do you understand it to mean?
  - This is the first time this word appears in the Bible. What do you make of the fact that the church engages in *koinonia* only AFTER they had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
  - The root Greek word of *koinonia* is the word *koinonos*, which means: a sharer, a companion, one who is a partaker, a partner with others. What do you see in verses 43-46 that would support this definition of *koinonia*?

- When we think of *koinonia* (translated as *fellowship*) being an unselfish sharing of possessions, the sharing of meals, the selling of property to help others in need - how does this make you feel? How is this different from a pot-luck dinner or an ice cream social?
- What effect did true *koinonia* have on those who were watching them - and who were not yet believers in Christ (v. 47)?
- **Read 1 John 1: 1-4.**
  - The “*That which...*” that John is talking about here (v. 1) is Jesus Christ.
    - What does it mean that Jesus was “from the beginning”? How does the way John begins this letter - 1<sup>st</sup> John - compare with the way he begins the Gospel of John?
    - How important is it that John actually HEARD the words of Jesus?
    - How important is it that John was an eyewitness to what Jesus did?
    - When John says here that he’s talking about things he has “looked at,” what do you think he has in mind?
    - When John says that he’s talking about things his hands have touched, what do you think he’s referring to?
    - How is Jesus the “Word of Life”? Again, how does this compare with how John began his Gospel?
  - John’s purpose in proclaiming what he had seen and heard was so that we, as readers, would have “fellowship”. You can probably guess that the actual word that John uses here is *koinonia*. Who is John inviting us to have *koinonia* with (him or with each other - see v. 3)?
  - Note the progression - *koinonia* begins at the human level, and then moves on to our relationship with the Father and the Son (v. 3). Why is this important to note?
  - If you think of this passage as providing a strong motivation for evangelism - what would you say that motivation is? What was John’s motivation for inviting us into fellowship with him (v. 4)? Does that surprise you at all...seeing that John invites us into a *koinonia* relationship with him (*understanding that this involves a complete sharing of ALL that we have*) for HIS (John’s) happiness and joy? Isn’t that a selfish motive? How does evangelism complete his joy?
  - How is John simply the conduit for a deeper fellowship with the Father and the Son?

### **Application:**

If God’s “master plan of evangelism” is that we invite others into *koinonia* with us - which then leads them into *koinonia* with the Father and the Son - how far should we be willing to go? What are you willing to give? And who, in the end, receives the joy?