

COVENANT(AL) FELLOWSHIP

Covenant Fellowship Church

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1. THE OBLIGATION OF COVENANT FELLOWSHIP

1.1 Confessional teaching:

HC, LD 21, Q/A 55

Q. What do you understand by “the communion of saints”?

A. First, that believers one and all, as members of Christ the Lord, have communion with him and share in all his treasures and gifts.¹

Second, that each member should consider it a duty to use these gifts readily and joyfully for the service and enrichment of other members.²

¹ Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:4–7, 12–13; 1 John 1:3.

² Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:20–27; 13:1–7; Phil 2:4–8.

1.2 The “one another” texts in Scripture:

The phrase “one another” contains two words in English, but it’s only one word in Greek: ἀλλήλων (*ah-LAY-loan*). It’s used 100 times in 94 New Testament verses. 47 of those verses give instructions to the church, and 60% of those instructions come from Paul.

Unity. One third of the one-another commands deal with the unity of the church.

1. Be at peace with one another (Mk 9:50)
2. Don’t grumble among one another (Jn 6:43)
3. Be of the same mind with one another (Ro 12:16, 15:5)
4. Accept one another (Ro 15:7)
5. Wait for one another before beginning the Eucharist (1 Co 11:33)
6. Don’t bite, devour, and consume one another (Ga 5:15)
7. Don’t boastfully challenge or envy one another (Ga 5:26).
8. Gently, patiently tolerate one another (Ep 4:2)
9. Be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to one another (Ep 4:32)
10. Bear with and forgive one another (Co 3:13)
11. Seek good for one another, and don’t repay evil for evil (1 Th 5:15)
12. Don’t complain against one another (Jas 4:11, 5:9)
13. Confess sins to one another (Jas 5:16)

Love. One third of them instruct Christians to love one another.

1. Love one another (Jn 13:34, 15:12,17; Ro 13:8; 1 Th 3:12, 4:9; 1Pe 1:22; 1Jn 3:11, 4:7,11; 2Jn 5)
2. Through love, serve one another (Ga 5:13)
3. Tolerate one another in love (Ep 4:2)
4. Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Pe 5:14)
5. Be devoted to one another in love (Ro 12:10)

Humility. About 15% stress an attitude of humility and deference among believers.

1. Give preference to one another in honor (Ro 12:10)
2. Regard one another as more important than yourselves (Php 2:3)
3. Serve one another (Ga 5:13)
4. Wash one another's feet (Jn 13:14)
5. Don't be haughty: be of the same mind (Ro 12:16)
6. Be subject to one another (Ep 5:21)
7. Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another (1 Pe 5:5)

Here's the rest:

1. Do not judge one another, and don't put a stumbling block in a brother's way (Ro 14:13)
2. Greet one another with a kiss (Ro 16:16; 1 Co 16:20; 2 Co 13:12)
3. Husbands and wives: don't deprive one another of physical intimacy (1 Co 7:5)
4. Bear one another's burdens (Ga 6:2)
5. Speak truth to one another (Ep 4:25)
6. Don't lie to one another (Co 3:9)
7. Comfort one another concerning the resurrection (1 Th 4:18)
8. Encourage and build up one another (1 Th 5:11)
9. Stimulate one another to love and good deeds (He 10:24)
10. Pray for one another (Jas 5:16)
11. Be hospitable to one another (1 Pe 4:9)

Make sure you read these in context! Don't stop with this list: dig into these passages to see what the author was talking about.

(adapted from <https://overviewbible.com/one-another-infographic/>)



2. ONE EXAMPLE / PRACTICE OF COVENANT(AL) FELLOWSHIP

2.1 The Admonishing Community: Mutual Discipline

Fallacy: church discipline begins with elders addressing an erring member.

Rom. 15:14

Col. 3:16

1 Thess. 5:14

2 Thess. 3:14–15

What these four passages have in common is the exhortation to mutual admonition (using the Greek verb *noutheteo*. This refers to the calling every believer shares to admonish, exhort, urge one another to *orthodoxy* (right belief) and *orthopraxy* (right action).

2.2 James 5:16, 19–20

2.3 But what about this admonition?

Matt. 7:1

Rom. 14:4, 10

1 Cor. 4:5

The warning in these passages “this does not imply flabby indifference to the moral condition of others nor to the blind renunciation of attempts at a true and serious appraisal of those with whom we have to live. What is unconditionally demanded is that such evaluation should be subject to the certainty that God’s judgment falls also on those who judge, so that superiority, hardness and blindness to one’s own faults are excluded, and a readiness to forgive and to intercede is safeguarded.” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, art. on *krisis* [“judgment”])

Let's talk about other examples in the life of our congregation of "one another-ing."

What resources may be needed to enable your example? What system of measuring "effectiveness" needs to be put in place? What objectives need to be explained?

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1. Do you wholeheartedly believe the doctrine contained in the Old and the New Testament, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and taught in this Christian church, to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation, and do you promise by the grace of God to continue steadfastly in this profession?
2. Do you openly accept God's covenant promise, which has been signified and sealed to you in your baptism, and do you confess that you despise and humble yourself before God because of your sins, and that you seek your life, not in yourself, but only in Jesus Christ your Savior?
3. Do you declare that you love the Lord, and that it is your heartfelt desire to serve Him according to His Word, to forsake the world, to put to death your old nature, and to lead a godly life?
4. Do you promise to submit to the government of the church, and also, if you should become wayward, either in doctrine or in life, to submit to its admonition and discipline?

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except in His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the gospel?
3. Do you resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to pursue its purity and peace?