

# *It Is Written*

*A weekly publication of the  
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.  
Vol. 23                      October 7, 2018                      No. 40*

## "After Services .... Fellowship"

*by Larry Ray Hafley*

Recently, I received a bulletin announcing the worship services of a church of Christ. It said, "Immediately after services, we will have a period of fellowship." This was a reference to a meal in their "Fellowship Hall."

Consider it. Did they not have "fellowship" during their worship services?! Alas, this typifies how the social gospel has usurped spiritual words, changing that which is divine and holy into that which is secular and worldly. As someone said, "When I hear the word, 'fellowship,' I can smell the coffee and taste the donuts." This is true today, but was it true in the New Testament?

"Fellowship," communion, is a Bible term. Not once was it used to signify a social meal — not once! Have we ceased to "speak where the Bible speaks"? What does it mean to "call Bible things by Bible names" and "do Bible things in Bible ways"? See Isaiah 8:20; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Peter 4:11.

We are called into the "fellowship" of Christ by the gospel (1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Thess. 2:14). "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jn. 1:3). It does not say, "We eat together that we may have fellowship." Brethren say it. The Bible does not. When Paul prayed that "the communion (fellowship) of the Holy Spirit," might be with the brethren, for what was he praying (2 Cor. 13:14)? If the answer to that question does not involve a social supper, why do brethren today equate fellowship with eating and drinking together?

How can we have "the fellowship of the Spirit"? Let an apostle answer, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). Could language be plainer? How, then, do brethren say, "When we eat and drink together, we have fellowship one with another"?

When we eat that bread and drink that cup, "is it not the communion (fellowship) of the blood of Christ?" "Is it not the communion (fellowship) of the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16, 17)? Yes, it is! Why, then, do brethren speak of "fellowship" as a lunch "after services"? Where is the passage that speaks of our fellowship in this manner? Where? Calling me an "anti" and smiling in contempt will not answer the questions raised. You may feel better, but you and I know that you have not dealt with the fact that Bible fellowship is a spiritual relationship in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13b; Eph. 3:6). It is not plastic forks and Styrofoam cups. You know it, and I know it, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

Years ago, if elders had announced they were going to build a formal "dining room" or a cozy "cafeteria," brethren would have rejected them. However, when they were given a "spiritual" connotation, "Fellowship Halls," that made them more palatable. "Fellowship Hall" sounds less fleshly, more spiritual. It worked. As Paul said of Israel, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (1 Cor. 10:7).

Since we demand of our religious neighbors that we define baptism according to the Bible, and not by the dictionary, and insist that we baptize as they did in the New Testament, and not as the traditions of men direct, why do we not do the same with the term, "fellowship"? However, if we may pervert the term "fellowship," and make it refer to "refreshments," why object to those who want to pervert the term "baptism," and make it mean "sprinkling"? Tell me. Why?

## The Scriptures Are Our Guide

*by Bill Hall*

Two different views exist as to how one comes to a knowledge of God's will. The first view is that one comes to this knowledge by carefully reading and understanding the scriptures; that Jesus promised His apostles that they would be led into all truth by the Spirit (John 14:26; 16: 13); that they, along with other inspired men, wrote that truth in the scriptures; that when we read what they wrote, we may "understand (their) knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:3,4); that the scriptures, consequently, are an all-sufficient guide from earth to heaven.

The second view is that each child of God is led in some direct way by the Spirit in understanding God's will. People are often heard to say, "God is leading me into this understanding," or "in this way," and in saying this they mean that He is leading them through some direct guidance. While they do not disregard the scriptures altogether, they feel that they are led in some additional way into an understanding of God's will, applying John 14:26 and John 16:13 to every "believer."

This writer confesses to holding the first view and would ask those who hold to the second view the following questions:

(1) If, indeed, all believers are led directly into an understanding of God's will, why was it necessary for the first converts to continue "steadfastly in the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42)? Would they not have had the same understanding of God's will as the apostles had?

(2) How do we explain the differences in doctrine and practice that exist among those who claim to be led into their understanding directly by the Lord? Differences abound among those who claim direct guidance, while the scriptures teach only "one faith" (Ephesians 4:4-6). Is the Lord really leading all these people into conflicting ideas? Is He the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33)?

If you could accurately communicate to me — either orally or in writing — this understanding into which you have been led, could I place as much confidence in it as I do in the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, etc? Could I continue steadfastly in your teaching as the early Christians did in the apostles' teaching? If so, how would I know to continue steadfastly in your teaching rather than in the teaching of some person whose understanding conflicts with yours? With all these conflicts, would we not have to go back to the Bible to know what was right? And wouldn't that, in reality, take us to the first view stated in this article, which I already accept?

The truth is—the scriptures are God's divine truth (John 17:17). One can read and understand them (Eph. 3: 3, 4). They are all-sufficient as a guide from earth to heaven (2 Tim. 3:16,17). They will provide the basis for our judgment in the last day (John 12:48). Read them carefully and obey them in love.

## For The Lack of Wood

*By Bob Dickey*

"For lack of wood the fire goeth out; and where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth. As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to inflame strife. . ." (Proverbs 26:20-21).

Slander and gossip are said to be like a fire; they heat up the spirit and cause us to speak inflammatory things. This kind of speech burns up all that is good. It will inflame and embroil families, friends, work associates, and brethren -- as well as enemies. All of our society bears the marks of fires that have raged out of control, destroying what is good and precious. And where does the fire start? It is the whispering gossip or slanderer, according to Solomon, that is often the one who fuels the fires of contention.

In the New Testament, James writes about the evils of the tongue and says: "Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! And the tongue is a fire; a world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell . . ." (James 3:5-6).

Brethren, what we must all do is put an end to the fueling of these fires! We must stop the talking that hurts and destroys others. When the whispering and gossiping stop, the fire will go out. When the rumors, evil reports, and tale-bearings cease, the contention will cease.