

What the Local Church Should Ask You

What forms the basis of
fellowship between Christians
and a local church?

Fellowship

- Fellowship exists in two capacities:
 - In a general condition of all brethren who share the common faith,
 - And the in the special relationship Christians share in a local church.
 - 1John 1: 3, 7 - “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ... 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Fellowship

- 2John 9 - “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”
- Acts 9:26-28 - “And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.”

Fellowship

- In deciding whether one can be in fellowship with a local church, he should determine whether the local church is the Lord's church.
 - Matt. 16:18 - "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."
 - 1Cor. 1:2 - "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"

Fellowship

- 2Cor. 3:1-2 - “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? 2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men”
- Rom. 16:1-2 - “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, 2 that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- Where were you last a faithful member?
 - Acts 18:27 - “And when he desired to cross to Achaia, *the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him*; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace”
 - 2Cor. 3:1 - “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, *as some others*, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?”

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- What do you expect in a local church?
 - You should want a sound church with which to worship God and to be edified, with opportunities to become an active part of the work, and prospects to participate in edifying others.

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- What do you expect from a local church?
 - Do you see the church as a gathering of people with whom you worship God, or as a place where you expect to be entertained?
 - Do you look forward to coming to worship, or do you contemplate how often you must put in an appearance to keep your membership?
 - Do you plan to visit those in need, or do you expect to be visited frequently?
 - Do you want Bible classes that challenge you to learn more and think more deeply about the inspired word, or do you prefer to hear the same first principles over and over again?

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- What is your understanding of fellowship and edification?
 - Are you more comfortable following the examples of faithful Christians, or imitating coworkers and classmates in the world?
 - Do you relish the idea of relationships with the other disciples here, or would you prefer to be left alone to do your own thing?

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- What kind of preaching do you want?
 - 2Tim. 4:2-5 - “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
 - 1Tim. 4:13 - “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- Do you plan to follow the leadership of the elders here?
 - Heb. 13:7, 17 - “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct... 17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- Describe your family condition.
 - Married, children at home or moved away, occupation, etc., all matters that can influence your role in the congregation and profoundly impacts fellowship.
 - Not the business of the local church?
 - Fellowship is the state of having the faith in common. If I do not share the same faith and am unwilling to confirm that we share the same faith in moral family matters, then fellowship does not exist.

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- Fellowship in the local church is an important matter often treated lightly.
- Both the individual and the local church should be honest and disclose all relevant information. Both need to know exactly what to expect from the other.

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- In the real world, there are occasions when the individual Christian decides he cannot have fellowship with a certain local church. He must sorrowfully depart and seek a faithful assembly.
- There are occasions when the church must not extend fellowship because of un-repentent sin or an immoral lifestyle. The disciple seeking fellowship should be moved to repent so that fellowship can exist.

What The Local Church Should Ask You

- 1John 1:7 - “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
- The Adversary is pleased when they instead choose to go to another congregation that accepts their sin unconditionally.