

Christian Values Focus Autumn 2021 Fellowship (Koinonia)

The use of the original Greek word emphasises the strength and importance of this concept within the Christian faith. Koinonia means 'that which is in common' and is often translated as 'fellowship' or 'community'. Other translations might include 'union', 'partnership', or 'being yoked together'. A yoke is a shaped piece of wood that goes across the shoulders, often linking two animals. By combining their strength, it helps work to be done and burdens to be carried.

Koinonia expresses the quality of relationship within the Christian community. It is based on fellowship with Jesus. Through him, Christians share the relationship that Jesus has with God. In John 17, Jesus prays that all his followers may be 'perfectly one' as he and the Father are one. Through him, Christians become sons and daughters of God and therefore brothers and sisters of each other. They are all members of the same family. A central element of being a family is interdependence: all are needed and valued and each person is important to the whole. The same message is found in Paul's image of the Christian community as the body of Christ. Each member of the body shares the joys and sufferings of the others and each depends upon every else.

The foundation of Christian koinonia is Christ's self-giving on the cross, the supreme demonstration of his love for all. We love because he loved us first. For the first Christians, this was expressed in a genuine common life with shared meals, shared possessions and practical support for the poor. The Christian church today continues to serve not only those within the Christian community but any who are in need.

God's people are like a city set on a hill to which all are drawn. God's people in community are a shining light for the world.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

² See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.

³ Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ "Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you."

(Isaiah chapter 60 verses 1 to 40)