



VISITORS' DAY: FRIENDS OF HOPE

April 12, 2014

Sabbath School Program: Fellowship in Hope

The word *fellowship* can mean different things to different people. Organize the class up into small groups of 3-4 people. Tell the group they have 3 minutes to discuss fellowship and how they would describe it to another person. Ask each group to share their observations. Write the responses on a whiteboard or flipchart. If the same idea is mentioned more than once mark this on the board in some way.

Have the class review the responses. Ask, "Do you see similarities in the answers that were given?" Allow time for discussion. Ask, "In what way does our personal experience (culture, family, negative experiences) affect how we view fellowship?" Allow time for discussion.

Introduce the idea that fellowship occurs in different ways. Say, "During the next few minutes we will explore the different ways we participate in fellowship." On a flipchart or whiteboard, write the following categories: "God," "Study," "Prayer," "Other Christians," "Service," "Giving. Make sure you leave room by each category to write Bible verses. These will be used later in the lesson.

Ask the class to remain in their small groups and have them discuss the following question: "What does fellowship have to do with these categories?" Tell the students they have 3 minutes to discuss this question. When the time is up, ask each group to report on what they learned. Write the responses on a whiteboard or flipchart. If the same idea is mentioned more than once, indicate this on the board in some way.

When each group has reported, look at the list together. Ask, "Which things on the list make you feel more comfortable about participating in fellowship? Allow time for answers.

Ask, "Which suggestions make you feel uncomfortable about fellowship?" Ask if anyone would like to share why they feel uncomfortable.

Say, "True fellowship is more than gathering together for a meal. It's more than a snack break between Sabbath School and the worship service. Fellowship can take place in many areas of our lives and in different forms."

Under the category of God, write the following texts: Luke 22:39; Luke 5:16. Ask individuals to read these and discuss how Jesus set an example of how spending time with God is fellowship. Write the text Mark 1:25-27 on the whiteboard or flipchart. Have an individual read the text aloud. Say, "The reaction of the crowd to what Jesus did was one of astonishment. Why do you think they were astonished? What does this text help us understand about the importance of fellowship with God?"

Under the category of "Study," write the following: "Translation," "Partner," "Daily," "How-To," "A Questioning Mind," "One-a-Day."

Say, "Each of these words gives instruction on how to have fellowship through Bible Study. When we choose a translation that we enjoy reading and that makes sense to us, we are able to fellowship with God through reading His word. By having a partner with whom we share our insights, we are fellowshiping by being accountable in our

study. Daily study helps us be consistent in our relationship growth with God. When we read something and ask, “How do I apply this to my daily life?” our fellowship with God increases again because we are finding something that He has said that speaks to our hearts. By putting it into practice, we show we are trust His influence in our daily lives. If you find something that you don’t completely understand, write it down and go back to it later to study it out more completely. Again, your fellowship with God empowers you to grow. Don’t forget the one-a-day principle of fellowship with God. Find one thing in your daily study to put into practice.

Fellowship through prayer is the time we can spend telling God what is on our hearts, but also spending time listening to Him tell us what is on His heart for us. Although this is done some in Bible study, God’s Spirit can impress even more on our hearts during quiet times of prayer.

Under “Other Christians” write the following Bible verses: Hebrews 10:25; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 4:10. Have individuals read these verses aloud and discuss how they encourage fellowship with other believers. Ask them to brainstorm ideas that could be done either as an extension of your class or as an outreach of the church to draw people into fellowship.

Under “Service” write 1 Corinthians 12:5. Ask the group to discuss how service can be a part of fellowship. Say, “Describe why service can be meaningful fellowship for you personally.” “How do you think the people you are working with respond to this kind of fellowship?” “What are appropriate ways to follow up with this type of fellowship?”

Under “Giving” write 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Have an individual read this text aloud and ask, “What are the responsibilities of having ‘things’ in this life?” “What are the pitfalls?” Have a volunteer read aloud 2 Corinthians 8:7-9. Discuss how giving shows our fellowship with God, with other Christians, and with those who haven’t yet accepted Christ.

Challenge your class with this quotation by William T. Ham. “There are many things which a person can do alone, but being a Christian is not one of them. As the Christian life is, above all things, a state of union with Christ, and of union of his followers with one another, love of the brethren is inseparable from love of God. Resentment toward any human being cannot exist in the same heart with love to God. The personal relationship to Christ can only be realized when one has ‘come to himself’ as a member of His Body, the Christian fellowship.”*

Musical Selections

Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

469–“What a Fellowship”

485–“I Must Tell Jesus”

350–“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

482–“Father, Lead Me Day by Day”

* [Http://blog.gaiam.com/quotes/authors/william-t-ham](http://blog.gaiam.com/quotes/authors/william-t-ham), accessed Feb. 5, 2014.