



When you read the word *fellowship*, what image comes to mind? Food? Get-together? As for me, I see the photo above. Foolhardy it was to strike out as a *lone ship* to traverse the vast ocean. Sailors of old clearly understood the importance of *fellowship* both onboard ship and the support of a *fellow ship* off the port or starboard bow. Without a *fellow ship* alongside, you would most likely neither make the journey nor fulfill the purpose for the trip. This is what I believe God wants us to have in mind when He speaks of *fellowship* in the Bible. In missions, we need fellowship with God and with one another. What brilliance of the translators in the KJV to use this word *fellowship* to represent the Greek word *koy-nohn-ee'-ah* meaning "a passionate bond accepting interdependence as a necessity." Hence, fellowship!

Fellowship with God requires one to "walk in the light" and is the catalyst to enjoying fellowship "one with another." In relationships, the struggle to find true fellowship is real. Finding a co-laborer (yokefellow) with whom to make the journey and conquer new lands together is exceedingly more daunting than observed at first glance. Jesus sent His laborers in groups. The apostle Paul mentions in II Timothy 4 that Demas, Crescens, and Titus forsook Him and that only Luke was with him. In John 6, Jesus loses all His disciples save twelve, and one of those remaining was a devil. Paul, however, had Timothy while Jesus had Peter, James, and John. Finding true fellowship is possible yet rare, even for our Lord.

One does not have to serve in ministry long to understand that people change their minds in the face of adversity and abandon ship. Jesus called us out to forsake all and follow Him. Oh, what joy it is when you find yourself sailing with another who has also counted the cost, burnt all bridges, and is committed to finishing the course, and fighting the good fight of faith! This kind of fellowship is a mighty wind in the sail.

When sailing with wind-driven vessels, there are times where there is no wind to fill the sails. This phenomenon is called doldrums. Sailors face struggles on three fronts. There is the struggle from outside the ship, from onboard the ship striving to work in accord in order to keep the boat shipshape until journey's end, and from struggles of the mind in the face of adversity terror fills the mind. When doldrums (stagnant ministry) or storms come, we need to stay in fellowship with God and fellow servants. Never abandon ship on fellow servants, on the cause of Christ, but most of all, never abandon ship on God. A Mariners' Creed says, "Stick together or perish." This is fellowship.

Jesus called over half of His disciples from the fishing/boating profession. Could it be that Jesus was showing His church a good pattern for true fellowship? Read Psalm 107:23-29. Those who understand the terror of the sea appreciate the need for fellowship when being a fisherman or a fisher of men.

The journey is too hard and the task too great without fellowship. Stay close to Jesus and each other.