



Links Players

THE FELLOWSHIP IN ANTIOCH

And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers of people; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

(Acts 11:26, NASB)

Fellowship. What does that really mean? Links Players currently has hundreds of fellowships across the country. Most consist of golfers, but golfing is not a requirement. Even among the golfers who attend, they all come in many shapes, sizes, backgrounds, and varied spiritual journeys.

Most who attend have found a real need to be there. As one man recently told me, "I come back because I really need this. It is changing my life." The common bond is Jesus. No one brings people together like Jesus.

I recently read of a church in northern Thailand by the name of The Gathering. On any Sunday, there are believers in Jesus from Korea, Ghana, Pakistan, China, the Philippines, the United States, and other countries.

They meet in an old hotel conference room with poor ventilation, no windows, and sing in unison: In Christ Alone and I am a Child of God. It is a beautiful thing to see the Holy Spirit at work in such a variety of people. They all come together with a common bond to worship Jesus. Nobody brings people together like Jesus.

In Acts 11, the church in Antioch included Greeks as well as Jews. Barnabas heard about this and immediately came to Antioch. It said that when he arrived, he witnessed the grace of God (Acts 11:23) and rejoiced with these pioneers of faith. The church exploded and grew. It says in Acts 11:25 that Barnabas then went to find Paul and brought him to Antioch. Both Paul and Barnabas stayed there a year teaching, preaching, loving, and encouraging.

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Others in the city noticed that centuries of animosity between Jews and Greeks was being healed. They declared that the followers in this Spirit-filled, multi-ethnic church should be called Christians, or "little Christs." This inclusivity is attractive to others. I am still amazed at all the "little Christs" I study with, dine with, and play golf with. Nobody brings people together like Jesus.

I am convinced that growth and maturity in all our faith journeys happen in community with all different types of people who have one thing in common—they believe that what Jesus said is true.

The journey of others emboldens our faith. Yes, I have learned that even "little Christs" have issues. I have learned that every one of us deals with life issues that bring us to our knees. I am not the only one. There are no lone rangers in our faith. Instead, their story is a part of my story, our stories, and His story.

Have I told you that nobody brings people together like Jesus? I not only preach it; I experience it every week. The assembling together of men and women on a common mission is not just a good idea; it is desperately needed. The kind of community believers had in Antioch can come to the United States or anywhere else for that matter. The church in Antioch set a good example for all the brothers and sisters who struggle.

Prayer – Lord, thank you that your plan for salvation is open to all. The Gospel can be good news for everyone.

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Randy Wolfe

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