



Links Players

SHARED PARTICIPATION

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. (Acts 2:42-45, NIV)

"The last two days are the first time I have stayed by myself. I feel a bit lonely and really don't know what to do." I nodded, validating the first-year Epson Tour player. My smile replied, "Welcome to tour life and adulthood." She laughed and received my lighthearted response.

There is a growing number of PGA and LPGA Tour players traveling with family or support teams, making tour life less lonely. And there remains a high percentage of professional golfers who travel the road alone. Loneliness is a familiar companion. Finding fellowship can be hard and requires effort. Some days, it is never found.

The early followers of Jesus gathered in fellowship for survival and companionship. Remaining alone was not an option under the hostile Roman rule and Jewish persecution. In the book of Acts, Luke writes, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship."

What is fellowship? The Greek word is *koinonia* and translates to sharing, fellowship, and communion. According to an article by Cheree Hayes and the BibleProject Team ("What Does the Bible Actually Say About Church Fellowship"), *koinonia* is shared participation within a community. Christ's followers around the world still today only survive because of shared participation in community. Western communities have become more self-efficient, but we are still called to practice *koinonia*.

The article mentioned above suggests when the Church (us) practices *koinonia* "it helps alleviate poverty" (Romans 15:26), "financially supports others and focuses on sharing" (2 Corinthians 8:3), and "generously shares its resources" (Hebrews 13:16). Sharing our time with others brings a taste of eternity here on earth. God's love moves among us when we emotionally give of ourselves. Sharing our resources places our trust in God and his provision.

It is important to check in with our motivations too. We either share from a heart of willingness, or out of our own self-promoting desires. The first leads to wholeness for an entire community. The latter destroys shared relationship and leads to mistrust within a community.

Cheree Hayes writes, "This is the mission of God – to unite creation to himself and human beings to one another. When God's mission is carried out, more and more joy, generosity, and peace of the Father, Son, and Spirit can be seen on Earth." We get to share in God's mission when we practice fellowship. The foundation to shared fellowship with God and with one another is because it has always existed within the Trinity relationship from the beginning of time.

Our Links Fellowships are *koinonia*. Through shared participation with God in our communities, our fellowships offer relationship with one another and promotes generosity towards others in need.

Prayer: Lord, help me practice *koinonia* today and always. Thank you for our Links fellowships that provide shared participation with God in our communities.

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Tracy Hanson

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