

TRUE FELLOWSHIP WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

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There is an essay on this site about [fellowship](#) which is in the Ministry section.

In the early 1960s, many Isle of Wight teenagers, of which I was one, would go to a Young Peoples' Meetings on Saturday nights. There would be 200 there. We would have a traditional hymn, a prayer, a reading from the Authorised Version of the Bible and a Bible Study. We all had our Bibles open and made notes. And they were Bible studies in those days given mainly by brethren preachers and it is known that the brethren are the best scholars of the Bible. And we have preachers in those days who knew their Bibles!

We did not have entertainment, pop music, dancing and people talking about themselves. We were not indoctrinated or dictated to. Nor were we brainwashed. We were not given any rules or regulations. We were not monitored.

We fellows dressed smartly as did the girls who wore respectable length skirts and dresses. They wore no make up or high heels and we were happy, but not in the frivolous sense. We did not gyrate to pop music or go dancing but we were not abnormal. Yes, some of the fellows dated some of the girls but there was no naughtiness. It was all innocent and commendable. We all believed that sex before marriage was always wrong and we did not practise sex.

At the end of the meetings, we had a drink and were still talking about the Study and this continued on the way home on various buses and we still had our Bibles open.

One Sundays, we went to our various churches and on Sunday nights the Gospel was preached and almost every week someone one was saved. Even the Methodist and Congregational Churches were evangelical in those days.

If a local church flirted with or embraced modernism our young people would find another church. Some would travel an hour each way on the bus to a church that was true. Others would walk miles there and back in all weathers. Some used bicycles. Some had parents with cars.

Our lives were radiant. We loved the Lord and the Bible.

Now, almost fifty years on, all that is gone. It is sad and, as a result, we are not producing the fine young and stable Christians of those bygone days.

We had a lady who lived out in the sticks who, with another friend, took four Sunday Schools every Sunday collecting the children in her van for two a week and another friend did likewise with the other to locations. They alternated their Sundays. One week Dorothy would have the Sunday Schools at Chale and Blackgang and John would have Shorwell and Brighstone. The next week Dorothy would have Shorwell and Brighstone. The children loved it. There were children from Council Houses and broken homes and others who had comfortable lives.

I remember that I fell in love with one of the Moody girls from Chale.

Many years later, in 2002, we visited 147 churches in our area over a period of two years. All but one used modern versions of the Bible, all but three used worship songs and jingles. Few used the organ but had bands with guitars and drums and performers that needed a haircut and a wash. We are not being rude. On some occasions we were very close to them... unfortunately.

We had girls dancing and using flags on long poles which were too heavy for them. The preaching was about self and personal experiences. The 'sermons' were about garden allotments, a holiday in Kenya, television programmes, their children and how well they were doing at university, how father burned the toast, Mrs Jones's disastrous hair do and why doughnuts are more enjoyable than church.

We are instructed in the New Testament that we are not to preach self but Christ and Him crucified. If we talk about ourselves then we receive the glory. Galatians 6.4 states, "God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of Christ".

Another version says that we are not to boast save in the Cross of Christ.

We are to preach, talk about, Christ and Him crucified.

It has been said that Christianity is Christ plus nothing!

At the charismatic 'churches' which we visited there were dancing girls in mini skirts or see-through dresses which engendered lust and some of those girls were sexually assaulted. It does not excuse the wrong doers but if the girls had dressed sensibly and according to Scripture these attacks may not have happened.

After these 147 services, there was usually fellowship which mean drinking tea or coffee and having a natter. Fellowship is not coffee and chat.

We joined in so as to complete our research. We heard about what was happening in Eastenders and Coronation Street; poor Charles's funeral and who was there and what they wearing and whose sat next to who, the forthcoming jumble sale, the naughty play at the theatre some had gone to; there was Gertrude and Cuthbert's garden party to raise money for the RNLI; George had been to Buckingham Palace to get his MBE and the women all chipped in with what was the Queen wearing?; and then there was talk about Daisy Miles who was in the family way at 14 and the subsequent conversation asking who is the father? Ladies were exchanging recipes; somebody had brought photograph album; someone was ranting about a wedding they had been to in London the day before!

The lady thrust a plate under our noses, "Have another piece of cake. I made this this morning. I hope you like it!".

This is not fellowship.

Fellowship is exclusively about God and the Lord Jesus. Our fellowship with each other is about our life with the Lord and fellow believers (1 John 1). Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst and that to bless. (Matthew 18.20).

Fellowship is nearness to Christ (Luke 24.15), the warming of the heart because He is there or fellowship is in the faithful expounding of Scriptures. You can tell when people have had true fellowship because it shows that they have been with the Lord Jesus (Acts 4.13).

Fellowship is always with and about the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1. 3)

It has nothing to do with tea, coffee, cake and gossip.

The Bible warns about gossip (1 Timothy 5.13). Those who gossip are tattlers and busybodies speaking things they ought not to speak. We must not be involved in other peoples' matters and lives (1 Peter 4.15).

A usual trick is when someone says, "Tell me the latest news about Clive so I can pray for him.". Poor Clive had a road accident and is in hospital and the enquirer really wants to know all the details, the latest gossip.

Christian nosey-parkers!

One thing these people do is that on one of your first visits to their church someone invites you to lunch or tea and call it fellowship. And so you go. Over the meal you are bombarded with questions and subjected to a type of inquisition! They want to know everything about you!

This has been called friendly fire.

Christian nosey parkers!

This is not fellowship. It is nosiness!

We live in days when the church is in decline. The Bible predicted this. People dismiss the AV, complain about the 'thees' and 'thous' and yet accept computer language. They sing unsound and inaccurate worship songs and jingles. Self is the main topic. Modern versions of the Bible have errors and misleading statements. They have dancing in church and excuse this by saying that David danced before the Lord ignoring the fact that this was vile.

(See separate article [*David, a man after God's own heart... really*](#))

(See also [*Songs of Fellowship*](#))

Churches have become ecumenical under the banner Churches Together and they say that doctrine and differences do not matter but what matters is unity in diversity. Sound doctrine is so 'last year'. It is out of date and certainly unwanted. People want to know all about you, interfere and have the fellowship of coffee and chat. Fellowship meetings are often like drop in centres although we are not disparaging drop in centres most of which do a good work.

We need a revival and return to those days of which I have spoken when we all adhered to God's Word and loved the Lord. In those days Christianity was real and pure.

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