

## Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: 1 John 1:1-7 (NT page 1255)

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### Background to the reading

**The first letter of John** is more like an essay in structure and format.

It seems clear from the Epistle itself that he addressed a certain issue that arose in the early church. The issue seemed to be that there were false teachers leading the early followers of Jesus astray through their false teachings of Jesus Christ. The author states throughout this Epistle that Jesus Christ was the pre-existent or as he says "from the beginning" the Son of God who came in the flesh to provide salvation for humanity. This group of heretics formed their own group, and treated the faithful without love. They claimed to have superior knowledge of God. They also claimed to be without any sin which, as the author pointed out, clearly shows that they do not need the redemption of Christ.

So in our reading the author points out how important it is to have fellowship or *koinonia* with the Triune God. The Greek word *koinonia* translated as fellowship means "participation, communion, close relationship".

Without having a relationship with God, no other fellowship or relationship is possible. God is light and whoever walks in His light, will have fellowship with one another on the basis of the redemption of Jesus.

The author wanted to say emphatically that if they, his readers maintain the relationship with God, their fellowship amongst one another will not fall away and they will not become the victims of the heretics or false teachers.

It is as if he is telling them to look at a triangle of fellowship. On the top there is God, and on the one side it is the "I" and on the other side it is the "they". The "I" cannot expect to love God if the "I" hates the "they" and vice versa.

If we love God, then we will love the “I” and the “they”. If this triangle remains intact then there is fellowship and peace...

Amen

**MP 760**

**When we walk with the Lord**

**Sermon**

I picked the reading for a reason. Today is Guild Sunday in the Church of Scotland and their theme for this year is “fellowship to build”. In our reading the author of the first Epistle of John emphasizes “fellowship” or *koinonia* as a necessity of having faith in God. It is a given in each and every life of faith to have *koinonia* with God and because of that, *koinonia* with the brothers and sisters in faith.

I think the message of 1 John is of particular interest to us because we realise all too often the darkness around us. God is light and if we have a relationship with him or *koinonia* then we will have His light to guide us in the darkness around us. His light will help us to see the path to the heavenly kingdom. It is not to say that we will not fall or experience hardship and struggle. Because we live in a dark world, more often than not we will be tempted to stray away in hide in the darkness. And his light will also help us to see more clearly the fellowship or *koinonia* we share with our brothers and sisters in faith.

I experience daily how this world needs *koinonia*, with God and other people. How people need to connect in a meaningful way with God and others....Something I realised last Saturday morning.

As I opened the curtains of the Manse I saw commotion at the children’s play Park behind us. At first I thought the police are questioning a young man, but then I realised that he is not standing but actually hanging from the climbing frame. To witness the police at work, cutting him loose, laying his body on the soil where children usually play, was to me and Nanda a big shock. We are still struggling to erase the picture from our minds...

But I guess this is just one example to tell us that everything is not ok with our society.

We need to get the message out that what is missing is *koinonia*. And you and I need to proclaim it everywhere we go. We need to tell people how important it is to have a relationship with God. We need to show them why we need God every second of every day.

We need God when we want to hang ourselves when living in this world does not make sense anymore,  
We need God when the last drink is just not enough,  
We need God when the last tablet or drugs is not enough.  
We need God when the morphine is no longer helping with the pain,  
We need God when our loved ones die,  
We need God when our children are taken away from us in tragic events,  
We need God when there is no other way to turn....

And yes we need to have fellowship with other people, especially when life is hard,  
We need other people to help us to see the Light of God,  
We need other people to help us when the alcohol or drugs makes us unsteady on our feet,  
We need other people to cuddle us and accept us just as we are, especially when we feel low and depressed,  
We need other people to be there for us when no one else is,  
We need other people when the pain of living becomes too much to bear...

I don't know who this young man was or what happened in his life, but seeing him hanging there made me realise that we should love more, care more, listen more. Understand more, hear more, see more, do more, feel more, forgive more, include more. *We should have fellowship with each other.* Not shallow, meaningless togetherness, but true fellowship, in the Biblical sense of the word.

We should live with our triangle intact, so that nobody ever ends up at the end of their rope, completely alone.

Just like we build a church, brick by brick, let's build our fellowship, person by person – not only here in this congregation but also in the Parish. If we want to make this work, every single one of us has a role to play.

Would this church still be standing if one stone/brick weren't there? Probably not, because every single one of these stones/bricks is important – they form part of the whole.

Every single one of us is important in this fellowship, because together we form a whole. And if all of us Christians, all over the world could build a true fellowship, we might just keep the world standing.

Amen