

# How Do We Decide About Fellowship ?

(The Cause We Plead Series - #6)

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## Review

In the New Testament we see ONE church made up of ALL THE SAVED following CHRIST as their only HEAD. No organization existed above the local body of Christians. Throughout history, men disregarded the Bible and/or went beyond Biblical teaching to change the simple organization, doctrine, and practices of the New Testament church until there are now thousands of denominations.

In a movement to restore the unity of the church, some proposed a principle of teaching and practicing only what is found in the New Testament.

When the principle was put into practice much progress was made, but it did not significantly affect the division and disunity that existed.

We should pursue the principle of restoration for the sake of unity and obedience.

A few things are essential for salvation, but attitude is essential for unity.

## A Comment About Fellowship

Even those who advocate restoration principles have not been able to achieve unity among themselves. The “Christians Only” of the restoration movement are now three distinct groups with unique names to set them apart. Sadly one can find within the churches of Christ many different groups who must be identified (denominated) by their particular doctrine. Beyond “doctrinal” differences we have also split, separated, and dual-served ourselves over our opinions and preferences. Within our brotherhood today there is much talk of unity – and both praise and condemnation of such talk. Emotion and an allegiance to tradition dominate most of those discussions. Perhaps we should follow the great principle of restoration and see what the Bible says.

## How Do We Decide About Fellowship ?

**Question 1: Are they \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ ?**

*Eph. 6:10* Do good to all people

*Mk. 16:15* Preach the gospel to all creation

*Eph. 5:11* Have nothing to do with the deeds of darkness

*1 Cor. 5:9-13* Don't associate with an ungodly “brother”

**Question 2: Do they \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ ?**

*Mk. 12:34* Consider them “not far from the kingdom”

*Mk. 9:38-41* Consider that they are “not against us but for us”

*Acts 18:24-26* Explain to them the way of God more fully

**Question 3: Are they \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.**

*1 Cor. 12:13* We are all baptized into one body

*Rom. 15:7* Accept one another just as Christ accepted you

*Gal. 6:10* Especially do good to them

*1 Cor. 1:10* Agree so there are no divisions and you are united

*1 Peter 3:8* Live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble

*James 4:11* Brothers, do not slander one another

*Rom. 14:1* Don't pass judgment on disputable matters

[If these scriptures are followed, even \_\_\_\_\_ differences will not divide us.]

**Question 4: Can a matter of \_\_\_\_\_ require separate congregational fellowship ?**

\_\_\_\_\_, if it affects an individual

\_\_\_\_\_, if it affects the whole body

\_\_\_\_\_, if it affects the “gathered” worship

## UNDERSTAND:

Setting the \_\_\_\_\_ of fellowship is \_\_\_\_\_ decision. *1 Cor. 1:9*

Our task is to \_\_\_\_\_ unity. *Eph. 4:3*