

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD “FELLOWSHIP” IN 1 JOHN

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Abstract

*The epistle of John begins with a prologue instead of a traditional epistolary opening, linking it to the Gospel and introducing the concept of fellowship (Greek: *koinōnia*), which encompasses communion, participation, and partnership both with God and among believers. John's intent is to invite readers into the fellowship of the apostles, eyewitnesses to Jesus' life, as seen in 1 John 1:3 and reiterated in 5:13 to assure them of eternal life. This paper argues that fellowship in 1 John is inherently communal, challenging interpretations that view it as individualistic.*

Keywords: *fellowship, communal, participation, partnership.*

Introduction

The Epistle of John lacks an epistolary introduction. According to Moody, the reason why 1 John does not have an epistolary introduction is specifically to create a similar effect as the Gospel. Instead of a salutation, we encounter a prologue. By imitating the structure of the Gospel's introduction, the author promptly directs the reader's focus to the significance of the connection between his writing and the Gospel.¹ He further stated that the focus on observation, listening, and declaration persists (v. 3) but a novel idea, fellowship (Greek: *koinōnia*), appears. Fellowship can be defined as a state of communion, active engagement, or collaborative relationship. The objective of proclaiming the gospel is stated here. This fellowship is both vertical and horizontal, so to speak. That is, it refers to the communion with God and Christ, as well as the fellowship among individuals.²

Simon and William state that John has expressed, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us." At the conclusion of his letter, Jesus has a similar objective: "I am writing these things to you ... so that you may be certain of your possession of everlasting life" (5:13). The objective is to extend an invitation to the readers to join the community of the apostles, who directly witnessed the earthly existence and activities of Jesus.³ They continued, "When people have fellowship, they share their mutual gifts, goals, and goods (compare Acts 4:32–37). The apostles shared their spiritual gifts with members of the

¹ D. M. Smith., *First, Second, and Third John* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 35.

² *Ibid.*, 37.

³ Simon. J. Kistemaker, & Hendriksen, William. *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of James and the Epistles of John*. Vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 238.

church. And second, John invites the readers of his epistle to join the eyewitnesses in their fellowship “with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”⁴

The implication is surely that his readers also will share in this fellowship with the Father and the Son as a result of their fellowship with him. “Fellowship” renders a Greek word which literally means “having in common.” Two or more persons can be said to have fellowship with one another when they have something in common.⁵

This argument concludes that the fellowship is not by individually but as a community. This argument is different with the other scholars who said that the fellowship is individually or every member of the church is need fellowship.

There are two views on the understanding of fellowship. Some said that the fellowship is not individually and the other said the fellowship is individually. By this two different views is needed to clarify the meaning of fellowship.

What is the true meaning of the word fellowship in 1 John? Is it a community or individually? This is the question that the author has to answer because there are difference understandings of the meaning of the word fellowship in 1 John. This paper is to clarify and to find out the meaning of fellowship in 1 John. This paper should be developed the information of the word fellowship in 1 John.

Two main research questions will guide this study:

1. What is the understanding of the early church regarding the fellowship?
2. How these understandings effect the church?

The purpose of this research is to determine the gap of understanding of the word fellowship in 1 John. To achieve the purpose, the research of the origin of the word fellowship should be done in the broad context of the Old Testament, in the New Testament context. And addition is the investigation of the understanding of fellowship in apostolic era, medieval era, reformation era, and in modern era. In modern era, the Adventist argument is included.

The significance of this research is to clearly understand the context of biblical fellowship in the era of Old Testament and New Testament. The varied of theologies on the subject of fellowship has increased in the Christianity trying to understand the meaning of fellowship. In order to provide a clearer and coherent picture of biblical fellowship, this research pursues to clarify fellowship and its significance in the service of the church. It will contribute to a better understanding of the expression of fellowship.

The Historical, Cultural, and Religious Background of the Fellowship

The concept of fellowship is actually appeared in Old Testament era but most fully develop in the New Testament as in the Israelite covenant. In this chapter the background of the fellowship is presented from the historical setting of the Israelite in the Old Testament.

⁴ Ibid., 238.

⁵ I. H. Marshall, I. H. *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1978), 104.

The Fellowship in the Old Testament

The idea of fellowship in Old Testament according to Demarest, “In the beginning, Adam was placed in the garden to enjoy friendship and communion with God. When the creature chose to assert his own autonomy rather than live under the Creator’s gracious care, fellowship was broken. Hence Adam and Eve hid themselves from the Lord’s presence (Gn 3:8). Yet God immediately sought them out (v 9) and revealed his plan for the ultimate restoration of sinners through the work of the Redeemer (v 15).”⁶

Demarest also said, “The OT tells how God began to draw a special people into fellowship with himself. Enoch is described as a man who walked with God (Gn 5:22, 24). Noah, likewise, walked in communion with the Lord (6:9). And Abraham, the father of Israel, is called “the friend of God” (Jas 2:23). No OT saint had deeper fellowship with God than did Moses during his 40-day encounter with the Lord on Mt Sinai (Ex 24). Later in Israel’s history David wrote psalms that reflect a heart vitally in tune with the living God (Pss 16, 34, 40, 63).”⁷

Although the idea is most explicit in the NT, it is adumbrated in the OT where the people of God share a common calling and inheritance as joint beneficiaries of the covenant made with them by God; they consequently share in the land and its fruits, in common worship and law, and are required on the one hand to share their material prosperity with their poor neighbors and on the other hand to abstain from common life with peoples outside the commonwealth of Israel (cf. Rom. 9:4f).⁸

Myers said:

Grounded in the Lord’s promise, “I will be with you” (e.g., Exod. 3:12, 16ff.), and governed and maintained by the covenant which was premised on that promise (e.g., Gen. 17:7–8; Josh. 24; Jer. 50:5), Israel enjoyed a unique relationship with Yahweh as the “people of God.” Symbolic of God’s presence with them were the cloud and the pillar of fire (Exod. 14:24; 40:34–38; Num. 9:15–23), the ark of the covenant (cf. Num. 10:35–36), and the tabernacle and temple (cf. Ps. 11:4; Ezek. 37:27). Although the Israelites were to accord special protection to strangers and foreigners who lived in their midst (Exod. 23:8; Deut. 10:18–19), they came to shun association with such heathen who were not among the chosen people (cf. Exod. 12:43; Neh. 9:2). To such a degree did the fellowship between God and his people determine the lives of the Israelites that the guilt of one who transgressed the covenantal stipulations extended beyond that person to his family and larger social units, and even to the entire nation of Israel (cf. Num. 16:31–32; Josh. 7:1; 2 Sam. 21:1–14; 24:10–17; 1 Chr. 21:12–17).⁹

⁶ Demarest, Bruce A. “Fellowship,” *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988), 789.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 789.

⁸ Robinson, D. W. B. “Communion; Fellowship,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 752.

⁹ Myers, A. C. *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 380.

The Fellowship in the New Testament

In the NT the fellowship of believers is chiefly designated by the Gk verb *koinōnéō* and its cognate forms, but the verb *metéchéō* and *merízō*, with their cognate forms, are also important (the three nouns *koinōnía*, *metoché*, and *merís* occur in parallel in 2 Cor. 6:14f), together with a number of words having a syn-prefix, and a number of images (e.g., the body) expressing the idea of common participation.¹⁰

Acts 2:42

Luke's only use of the noun *koinōnía* (he does not use the verb) occurs in a passage of singular interest. The three thousand converts at Pentecost "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." "Fellowship" here has its own definite article, and the phrase "to the fellowship" should stand as a separate object of "devoted themselves," coordinate with "to the apostles' teaching."¹¹

Bruce said:

The depth of comradeship among the first Christians is portrayed in the early chapters of Acts. Daily the believers met together in house groups for teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42, 46). So profound was their sense of togetherness that the Christians pooled their possessions and distributed them to brethren in need (vv 44, 45; 4:32–35). Perhaps the dominant characteristic of this early Christian fellowship was "love of the brethren" (1 Thes 4:9; 1 Pt 1:22). Constrained by love, Paul organized among the gentile churches a collection for poor believers in Jerusalem. In Romans 15:26, which speaks of the gifts of the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, the word translated "contribution" is the common Greek word for "fellowship." Similarly, the fellowship which the Philippian church shared with Paul assumed the form of gifts to support the apostle's ministry (Phil 1:5; 4:14, 15).¹²

Robinson argued, "Although Acts 2:42 is describing the external rather than the internal character of the believers' common life, this is perhaps the only place in the NT where *koinōnía* is used as a term for this common life in general. Elsewhere, *koinōnía* is used with reference either to the association of particular groups among believers (especially the association of Gentiles with Jews), or else to particular benefits that believers share in common."¹³

Communion between Particular Groups

The people in ancient is practice of fellowship. Robinson said, "More particularly, the gentile believers (of Macedonia and Greece) have come to share (*koinōnéō*) the spiritual benefits of the saints at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:27). The securing of this communion is a central benefit of the gospel (see esp Eph. 2:11–21), though many problems were encountered in the attempt to

¹⁰ Robinson., 752.

¹¹ Ibid., 752.

¹² Bruce., 789.

¹³ Robinson., 753.

give practical expression to fellowship at table and in other aspects of common life (Acts 15; Gal. 2; Rom. 14).”¹⁴

And he continued, “Although in contexts such as these *koinōnia* comes nearly to mean “give” or “receive” a share, Paul’s insistence on the principle of equality (*isótēs*) of participation shows that the basic idea of *koinōnia* remains the common sharing, rather than the incidental giving or receiving that may be necessary to secure such fellowship (2 Cor. 8:14).”¹⁵

Communion in Christ and the Spirit

The communion in Christ and the Spirit is part of the fellowship. Robinson said, “In 1 Cor. 1:9ff the common sharing of Christ is set over against a party spirit that absurdly implies that Christ is the peculiar possession of a segment of the Church. “‘I am of Christ.’ Has Christ been apportioned [i.e., given as the exclusive portion of one section]?” No, the whole people of God shares together in Christ, as the type in 1 Cor. 10:4 indicates. Cf. He. 3:14: “We share in Christ,” A corollary of this is the fellowship of believers in Christ’s sufferings (Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 4:13), although the *koinōnia* here is strictly a sharing in suffering by both Christ and the believers.”¹⁶

The corporate reception of the Spirit by believers (Gal. 3:2, 5; Acts 1:5; 2:4) is obviously related. Compare 1 Cor. 12:13 with 10:4 implying an identity between drinking of Christ and drinking of the Spirit. OT types and promises lie behind these ideas, as also behind the pictures of fellowship in “calling” and “inheritance” in He. 3:1 and Col. 1:12.¹⁷

Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ

The communion in the body and blood of Christ is understood by the church as the practical of their spiritual life. Robinson argued, “Thus, while Paul does not actually designate the Lord’s supper by the title of “communion,” he asserts that to share together in it is a fellowship or communion with one another in the death of Christ. It weakens the force of this passage to restrict the meaning of *koinōnia* in 1 Cor. 10:16 to “partaking” merely; the full sense of “communion” is intended. There is an objective reality, the death of Christ; and the unity of believers springs from their all being joined together in that death.”¹⁸

As a result of Christ’s finished work on the cross, God now makes his permanent abode in the believer’s heart (Jn 14:23). Hence the fellowship which now prevails under the new covenant is nothing less than the vital, spiritual union of the believer with Christ (Jn 14:20, 21).¹⁹

¹⁴ Ibid., 753.

¹⁵ Ibid., 753.

¹⁶ Ibid., 753.

¹⁷ Robinson., 753.

¹⁸ Ibid., 753.

¹⁹ Bruce., 789.

ANALYSIS OF 1 JOHN 1:3

This chapter provides an exegetical analysis of Acts 1 John 1:3. It consists of four sections such as the text, the translation, the literary analysis, phrase analysis, and the summary. This analysis of text is to discuss the ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as it was mentioned in introduction of the paper.

Text and translation

1 John 1:3

Ὁ ἐώρακαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

The translation:

that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed your fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (ESV).

Literary Analysis

The second and third writing of John is 1, 2, and 3 John, and the book of Revelation. In this section will provide all analysis of the literary qualities of the text. It is divided into the following subsections: Literary type and literary structure.

Literary Type or Genre

Kenner said, “The form is more like a homily than a letter (except 2:12–14). That the epistolary prescript (opening) and conclusion are missing need not surprise us; they were sometimes removed when letters were incorporated into collections (although 2 and 3 John retain standard elements of letters). But the whole document flows more like a sermon, albeit one not structured by the rhetorical conventions of the day. It thus resembles the form of letter known as a “letter-essay,” although it nevertheless addresses the specific situation of the readers.”²⁰

The Literary Structure

“The structure of 1 John is determined by its author’s purpose, which was to provide an antidote to the false teaching which confronted his readers. It is, however, extremely difficult to find a pattern in the author’s thinking, and many different suggestions have been offered.”²¹ And

²⁰ C. S. Keener, “1 John,” The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 2.

²¹ Marshall, I. H., “The Epistles of John,” New International Commentary in the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 22.

he continued, “A classical view is that the thought of the Epistle proceeds in the form of a spiral, the same ideas being repeated several times at ever higher levels of discussion.”²²

Analysis of 1 John 1:3

The finding of the previous part is basically built on another analysis that is called a verse-by-verse analysis. In this section is going to analyses the syntactical features and the usage of the important terms in each verse.

The Word of Life

In verse one (ὁ ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς) John the apostle has to tell that the Word of Life is not new encounter. It related with the creation and continued in the history through the message of the servant of God. Word of Life is climaxed in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God.²³ Brook continued:

The words *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* necessitate some such interpretation of the phrase. It cannot refer to the eternal, pre-existent nature of the personal Word, though in the writer’s conception this is no doubt included. The whole message of God’s revelation, as it has been gradually unfolded, is the object of the writer’s ἀγγελία. The mystery which he takes his part in “revealing” is concerned with the eternal reality underlying the phenomena apparent to sense-perception and needed to explain them.²⁴

Marshal in his commentary said, “The “Word of life” can mean the message which conveys this life to men or which tells them about it (Acts 5:20; Phil. 2:16). The phrase would then be a description of the Christian message preached by the writer and his colleagues. But if we glance back at John 1:4 we find that “in him was life,” and in John 11:25; 14:6 Jesus says that he is life. Here, therefore, Jesus himself may be meant as the Word who is the source and substance of eternal life.”²⁵

We have heard (ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν). The author mentioned the whole revelation of the nature of God and his relation to the world. And it was from the beginning. The human can heard and touch in the fullness of humanity of incarnation.²⁶ Smalley said, “Perhaps for the benefit of

²² Ibid., 22.

²³ A. E. Brooke, “1 John,” A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistle (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 1.

²⁴ “What he has to say is one stage in its unveiling; his words are part of a process of teaching which began when “God said, Let there be light.” Cf. Rothe, p. 18; part of his note may be quoted or paraphrased. “The thought of an original being, which has its object in itself, is indeed the most abstract thought to which human consciousness can reach; but yet it lies close to hand, and no one can dispense with it who examines attentively himself and his surroundings.” Ibid., 1.

²⁵ I. H. Marshall, The Epistle of John (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1978), 103.

²⁶ Brook., 2.

those of his readers who were entertaining docetic (i.e. humanity-denying) views of Christ's person, the writer stresses the reality of God's self-disclosure in time and space."²⁷

We have seen (*ἐωράκαμεν*). in this part Smalley said, "John may thus be saying that the truths which prepared the way for the gospel were finally realized in Jesus (cf. Heb 1:1–2), when the "word of life" could be "heard" in his preaching and "seen" in his ministry by those who believed."²⁸ Kruse argued, "This expression, found only here in the NT, is used to reinforce the claim that the proclamation of the Word of life comes from one who is an eyewitness."²⁹

We beheld (*ὁ ἑθεασάμεθα*). Brook argued, "It has been "heard" and "seen" so that those who first received it have it as an abiding possession which they can impart to others. Now the facts of its reception are presented in such a way (by the use of the aorist) as to emphasize their character."³⁰ He continued, "The aorist presents its object as a complete fact, or series of facts regarded as one whole, having a definite character. The witness is not only abiding, it is also satisfactory in kind. It rests on complete and intelligent use of adequate opportunities."³¹

Kruse argued, "There does not appear to be any notable difference in meaning between the verb 'to see' (*horaō*) and the verb 'to look at' (*theaomai*) used here in v. 1, but the different tenses used in each case represent different emphases by the author: the perfect (in the case of 'we have seen with our eyes') focuses on the status of the author as one of the eyewitnesses, and the aorist (in the case of 'we have looked at') simply narrates the seeing itself."³²

Touched (*ἐψηλάφησαν*). In this word Brook said, "Here it naturally suggests all the evidence available for sense-perception other than hearing and sight. Possibly it emphasizes the reality of that with which they had been brought into contact, in opposition to the Docetism which may have characterized the views of the writer's opponents. It certainly marks the intimate character of their personal intercourse with the Lord."³³

²⁷ "In so doing John moves beyond the concept of the life-giving word about Jesus, to the Word of God disclosed in Jesus (the life-giver) himself. For the reference of these four evocative verbs ("we have heard, seen with our eyes, observed, and felt with our hands") is very practical. In a typically Johannine manner, the writer speaks of the Christian revelation as a unique conjunction of the timeless and the historical." Smalley, S. S. (1989). 1, 2, 3 John (Vol. 51, p. 7). Dallas: Word, Incorporated. S. S. Smalley, 1, 2, 3 John, vol. 51 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 8.

²⁹ C. G. Kruse. The Letters of John (Grand Rapids, Mich: Leicester, England, 2000), 52.

³⁰ Brook., 5.

³¹ Brook., 4.

³² Kruse., 52-53.

³³ Brook., 5.

Kruse argued, “The expression ‘to touch with the hands’ is found only here in the NT, but the verb ‘to touch’ (*psēlaphaō*) occurs in three other places: in Luke 24:39 and Heb. 12:18, where it denotes a physical touching (with the hands), and in Acts 17:27, where it has the metaphorical sense of feeling after God (something made clear by the context).”³⁴

Fellowship (*κοινωνία*).

“Fellowship” renders a Greek word which literally means “having in common.” Two or more persons can be said to have fellowship with one another when they have something in common.³⁵ In this part John the apostle mentioned the purpose of his writing. The fellowship is both Christian in basis and apostolic in character.³⁶ Yarbrough said:

A fifth and final point of the opening verses of John’s epistle is that what he reports is intended to nurture fellowship: he writes so that his readers “may have fellowship with us”—that is, the apostolic “we” who testify of Jesus’s earthly and heavenly life. And, John continues, this is not just any fellowship at all, but that fellowship shared peculiarly²⁹ by those who know God the Father in his Son Jesus Christ. The word “fellowship” (*κοινωνία*, *koinōnia*) is not particularly common in the NT (nineteen times total) and never occurs in the Gospels.³⁷

Fellowship with others. Kistemaker and friends said, “John states the purpose of his letter in this verse. Says he, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us.””³⁸ And they continued, “The invitation serves two ends. First,

³⁴ “The verb is found 15 times in the LXX, where it is used predominantly to denote actual touching (with the hands). In the present context the author is clearly using the verb to mean actual touching with the hands. By doing so he claims that his proclamation rests on the experience of not only seeing, but also of having touched with his own hands the Word of life.” Kruse., 53.

³⁵ “James and John were sharers with Simon in their common pursuit of fishing (Lk. 5:10). Paul and Titus shared in a common faith (Tit. 1:4; cf. Jude 3). Believers share in the grace of God (Phil. 1:7), in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:9), and in spiritual gifts generally (Rom. 15:27).” Marshall, I. H. *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 104.

³⁶ “Fellowship” (*κοινωνία*) is a richly significant theological term. The Gr. word literally means “joint ownership,” or “partnership.” In the NT this “mutual sharing” may refer to participation in either material goods, as when Christians in Macedonia and Achaia “raised a common fund” (*κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι*) for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (Rom 15:26); or in spiritual benefits, as when Paul speaks of “sharing” (being *συγκοινωνός*) in the blessings of the gospel (1 Cor 9:23), or enjoying—in the words of “the Grace”—the “fellowship of the Spirit” (2 Cor 13:13; cf. also Rom 15:27).” Smalley., 11-12.

³⁷ Robert W. Yarbrough, “1-3 John,” *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapid, Mich: Baker Publishing, 2008), 40-41.

³⁸ S. J. Kistemaker, & Hendriksen, W., “1 John,” *New Testament commentary : Exposition of James and the Epistles of John*, Vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), 237.

John seeks to shield the readers from the doctrinal attacks of false teachers and to strengthen them spiritually within the fellowship of the apostles and disciples.¹² When people have fellowship, they share their mutual gifts, goals, and goods (compare Acts 4:32–37). The apostles shared their spiritual gifts with members of the church.”³⁹

Fellowship with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ. Thompson argued, “God alone creates and sustains life. And in Jesus, God offers eternal life, which is neither more nor less than knowledge of and fellowship with the one living God (Jn 17:3). God’s desire is not to bring death, destruction or condemnation, but life, healing and release. This life can be experienced here and now, for it is received as one becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ.”⁴⁰

In this phrase Kruse also argued, “Christian fellowship is primarily a fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ his Son. The priority of the Father in this statement reflects the Johannine understanding of things. In the Fourth Gospel even eternal life is defined in similar terms: ‘Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent’ (John 17:3).”⁴¹

The Joy Complete

The greatest joy to fill the heart of the apostle John and those with him is to see the believers increase in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants them to have full fellowship with the Father and the Son, so that the believers live in full communion with God.⁴² Kruse argued, “the author’s purpose in this passage was to remind his readers of the origins of the gospel, that it was a message concerning ‘the Word of life’, and that this is what constitutes the basis of the fellowship they share and in which he wants them to continue.”⁴³

Theological Implication

Fellowship is important word that the John the apostle wants to explain in his letter. Because Fellowship is cover the whole relationship that the Christianity need to have in their life. Kruse argued, “The term ‘fellowship’ (*koinōnia*) is found only four times in 1 John (and not at all in 2 John, 3 John, or the Fourth Gospel). All four occurrences of the word are found in vv. 3, 6, and 7, where the author is concerned to bring his readers into fellowship with those who (truly) proclaim ‘the Word of life’, which also involves fellowship with the Father and the Son.”⁴⁴

³⁹Kistemaker., 237-238.

⁴⁰ M. M. Thompson., The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 1-3 John (Downers Grove, Ill., USA: InterVarsity Press, 1992)

⁴¹ Kruse., 58.

⁴² Kistemaker., 239.

⁴³ Kruse., 59.

⁴⁴ “The author does this against the background of what he believes is the false claim of the secessionists to have fellowship with God, and their attempt to lead his readers astray and

Elwell and friends said:

Scripture lays down the basis of fellowship in 1 John 1:7: “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another” (RSV). Jesus Christ, then, is the source and fount of all spiritual communion. Only when rightly related to the Lord do we experience true fellowship with another Christian. Just as light and darkness are incompatible, so a believer can have no real fellowship with an unbeliever. Neither can the Christian be in fellowship with one who walks contrary to the teaching of Christ (2 Jn 1:9–11), or a professing brother who is immoral, idolatrous, a drunkard, or a thief (1 Cor 5:11).⁴⁵

In verse 7 the author argued that the fellowship is not based on mutual assent to a common purpose, but as people walk in the light as God is in the light.⁴⁶ He continued, “Koinōnia in 1 John 1:3, 6, 7 appears to denote a personal relationship p 61 with the author or with God, and may, in 1:3 in particular, include the idea of commitment to a common task, that of the proclamation of the Word of life.”⁴⁷

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 presented the introduction of the paper. The background of laying on of hands in the Old Testament and in the New Testament is shared in chapter 2. The background of the book is discussed in chapter 3. In chapter 4 is discussed the analysis of the text. And the last chapter is the summary and conclusion of the chapter.

The word of fellowship is not implicit appear in the Old Testament, but the idea or the message of this word is generally appeared in the Old Testament. In the garden of Eden the relationship between the human and God is clear. The people of God in the Old Testament like the patriarch many of them live close to God. Enoch, Abram, Moses, David, and many more of them have a good relationship with God and with the other people.

In the New Testament also mentioned about the fellowship ideas. From the Gospel, the epistle of Paul, and also in the second book of Luke is very clear the idea of the fellowship. An especially in the epistle of John the word fellowship is appeared more then the other books.

John the apostle has purpose when he wrote the epistle in 1-3 John. The situation of the church in his time needs to have support by the apostle because there many false teacher among

presumably to incorporate them into their fellowship. The context of the introduction of the term koinōnia into 1 John, then, suggests that it was not a characteristic term employed by the author, but rather one used by his opponents and one he took up and used in his effort to deny what they claimed, that is, that they have fellowship with God without having fellowship with other believers (those belonging to the author’s group).⁹ Fellowship with God, he insists, means fellowship ‘with us’.” Ibid., 59.

⁴⁵ Elwell., 484.

⁴⁶ Kruse., 60.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 60-61.

the people who teach the false teaching. Through this epistle the apostle remain them about Jesus is the life that came in this earth through incarnation.

The fellowship is important aspect that the people of God should have in their life and to live it in their life. This fellowship has to love one another and love the Father and the Son, Lord Jesus Christ. This argument of the author is important for the church to protect them when facing the hard situation in their spiritual life. The fellowship has to experience by individually because this fellowship is part of spiritual life of every individual before God. If every individual has good fellowship with one another and God the father, Son, Lord Jesus Christ, they will walk in the light and has eternal life.

This information is really applicable for the modern church while waiting the coming of Jesus Christ in the second time. The people of God need to have this knowledge so they will have power when they face situation like the ancient church experienced.

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