

In the fall of the year, Linda, a young woman, was traveling alone up the rutted and rugged highway from Alberta, Canada to the Yukon. Linda didn't know you don't travel to Whitehorse alone in a rundown Honda Civic, so she set off where only four-wheel drivers normally venture. The first evening she found a room in the mountains near a summit and asked for a 5 a.m. wakeup call so she could get an early start. She couldn't understand why the clerk looked surprised at that request, but as she awoke to early morning fog shrouding the mountain-tops, she understood.

Not wanting to look foolish, she got up and went to breakfast. Two truckers invited Linda to join them, and since the place was so small, she felt obliged. "Where are you headed?" one of the truckers asked. "Whitehorse" was her reply. "In that little Civic? No way! This pass is DANGEROUS in weather like this." "Well, I'm determined to try" was Linda's gutsy, if not very uninformed response."

"Then I guess we're just going to have to hug you," the trucker suggested. Linda drew back. "There's no way I'm going to let you touch me!" "Not like THAT!" the truckers chuckled. "We'll put one truck in front of you and one in the rear. In that way, we'll get you through the mountains."

All that foggy morning Linda followed the two red dots in front of her and had the reassurance of a big escort behind as they made their way safely through the mountains. That story reminds me of what this church is supposed to be like. Caught in the fog of our dangerous passage through life, we need to be "hugged". With fellow Christians who know the way and can safely lead ahead of us, and with others behind, gently encouraging us along, we, too, can pass safely. – Don Graham as quoted in Growing strong in the seasons of life by Chuck Swindoll, p. 286

Are you traveling on a road alone? Are you trying to get up and down a mountain by yourself? Maybe it's foggy. Maybe it's raining. Maybe you are running out of gas or that old car of yours is beginning to break down after running so hard for so long. Maybe it's night and you can't see far in front of you. It's lonely when you travel such a hard road by yourself. Are you trying to do this alone? Would you rather get some help, some guidance? Well, be glad because you are part of a fellowship where there is someone to help guide you, drive in front of you to lead you safely. And there's someone to back you up and follow behind you to make sure to get there safely. You'll find them right here – at the church of Jesus Christ.

When most people think of the word "fellowship" in a church context they think of going out to dinner after church
Or hanging out in the lobby
Or going to a baseball game
Or something else in the activities realm
But there is more to it than that

It is about developing relationships that build us up
It is about allowing God's people to influence how we live our lives and how we understand our faith

Acts 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The word *koinonia* in the New Testament literally means “a communion”, a participation of people together in God's grace. It means to have something in common. Common participation in something either by giving what you have to the other person or receiving what he or she has.

- It describes a community in which individuals willingly pledge to share in common, to be in submission to each other, to support one another and bear one another's burdens, to build up each up in our relationship with Jesus.

Emphasis on meeting needs as they arise
Put others first

Mission Statement – We are a praying *community* of Christians, reaching and developing people for Jesus.

We have fellowship so that we can grow together in Christ. We have fellowship with one another so that we can be there for one another.

- We cannot help each other if we do not know each other. We cannot have true fellowship if we do not spend time together. We cannot help each other if we are afraid to open up to one another. I imagine that if you would ask those who have been willing to let others get to know them, most of them would say they have been helped by this.

1TH 5:11 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Corinthians 1

⁹God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

We are called into fellowship with Jesus and if we are all in fellowship with him, then we are in fellowship with God. We are also in fellowship with each other. But it begins with being in fellowship with Christ.

Heb 10:25 – Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

When was the last time you invited someone from your church family to your home? Maybe it's time. When was the last time you invited someone from your church family to go out with you – to the movies, to dinner, to the ball game, to go fishing, to hike in the park, to go bike riding, to go for a walk? Maybe it's time. When was the last time you confided in someone from your church family regarding a sin, a secret, a pain, a hurt? Maybe it's time. You can try to go it alone. You can try to get through the treacherous road by yourself. But that's not how God made you. God made you to lean on your church family. You can do it your way or you can do it God's way. I can guarantee you that God's way will be much more effective and you will find yourself much happier when you allow God to bless you.