

Koinonia: Partnership in the Gospel / Philippians 1:3-8 (ESV)

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Koinonia as *Fellowship* (Inward Focus)

Koinonia as *Partnership* (Outward Focus)

Both aspects of koinonia are needed for there to be true community

Philippians 1:3-8 (ESV)

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Koinonia as “Partnership in the Gospel” (verse 5)

The reason for thankfulness to God and joy was the “partnership in the gospel”

What is a Partnership in the Gospel?

1) A partnership entails being **united by a common goal and purpose**

“Whereas relationship describes believers as a community, partnership describes them as a community in action.” (Jerry Bridges)

The Philippian church’s financial and prayer support of Paul

“The Philippians had apparently been taught that koinonia within the Christian community involved a working relationship. They recognized that they had a missionary responsibility to those cities beyond them and that one major way they could fulfill that responsibility was to give to the ministry of the missionary Paul. They teamed up with Paul through their gifts to him.” (Jerry Bridges)

The mission of the church is to live out the Great Commandment and Great Commission

2) A partnership in the gospel means being **outward focused**

The dangers of becoming insular and having a consumerist mentality

True koinonia through partnership in the gospel breaks us out of our consumerism and opens us up to what God is doing in the world

“The lost can’t come to us. Someone who’s dying doesn’t need a hospital address; they need an ambulance. The Bible tells us that lost people are physically alive, but spiritually dead. We must stop expecting the lost to come to us. We must go to them.” (Chris Alley, North Carolina Baptists)

Paul’s focus on the advancement of the gospel

3) A partnership in the gospel is still **rooted in relationship and mutual care**

Verse 6 - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Personal assurance of God's work in our personal lives (personal sanctification)

God is the one who is doing the work of mission and guarantees its success according to his will

Application Questions

- 1) When do you usually find yourself thankful to God and joyful? Is it more generally when something good happens to you? Do you find yourself being thankful to God and joyful when you see the gospel advancing in the world?
- 2) Do you find your prayers to God to be more focused on your own personal needs or is there also a component in your prayers that are is focused on reaching people with the gospel message?
- 3) Are there areas in your life where you are practicing a consumer-based Christianity? Do you find yourself more seeking to be served or seeking to sacrificially serve?
- 4) Faithfulness to God's purposes include living out both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. In what ways are you living out both and in what ways do you need to be more intentional in both areas?
- 5) What are some specific ways you can form partnerships in the gospel with other people, groups and/or organizations for the sake of the advancement of the gospel?