

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will teach from the Bible what is a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: **A DISCIPLE HAS FELLOWSHIP BY EXERCISING THE ONE-ANOTHER RESPONSIBILITIES**
We will teach the importance of Christian fellowship, the characteristics of Christian fellowship and the specific one-another responsibilities of Christian fellowship.

(S) **POINT 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

Let me read John 13:34-35. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
Christian fellowship is basically "loving one another as Christ loved us". Why is Christian fellowship important?
First. Christian fellowship is important, because Christ commands it. To love one another is therefore not an option, but a command of Christ to all Christians in the world.
Second. Christian fellowship is important, because it is the distinguishing characteristic in the Christian religion. To love one another is the most important characteristic that distinguishes Christians from all other people in the world. Christian love attracts people to Jesus Christ. The more you practise Christian love in your fellowship, the more people would like to join your fellowship. Moreover, whenever we love one another, we bring glory to Jesus Christ.

(T) **POINT 2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

First. Christian fellowship is a close relationship and a sharing partnership.
Christian fellowship is a close relationship with the Triune God, because 1 John 1:3 says, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship ... with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ". And 2 Corinthians 13:14 says, "May ... the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." But Christian fellowship is also a close relationship with other Christians. 1 John 1:7 teaches that if Christians walk in the light as the God of the Bible and Jesus Christ is in the light, then they also have fellowship with one another. Christians cannot have fellowship with people who walk in the darkness or with people who do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Light of the world. Acts 2:42 relates that Christians do important things in their fellowships. They devote themselves to the teachings of the apostles in the Bible and they pray. They meet together and pray together. They eat together and they share their possessions together.

(S) Second. Christian fellowship is a fellowship of Christians together in a church.

The letter to the Ephesians teaches that the Christian Church is not simply an organisation, but an organism. It is called the Body of Christ. The Christian Church functions like a human body. The head of the Church is Jesus Christ and not the leaders of the church. The members of the Church are all the Christians and each has a different function in the body. The Christian Church is a community of people in whose midst God himself dwells through his Holy Spirit. Every believer has direct access to God through faith in Jesus Christ. There are no intermediaries like saints or priests between man and God. Finally, the Christian Church is a holy community, because it deals with sin and injustice. And the Christian Church is a loving community, because its goal is to love like Jesus Christ.

(T) Third. Christian fellowship is a relationship with responsibilities.

The best way to understand Christian fellowship is to study "the one another responsibilities". What are the "one another" responsibilities? In a number of passages in the Bible you can read the following: "love one another", "teach one another", "serve one another", etc. These are called "one another" responsibilities. The "one another" responsibilities are the responsibilities every Christian has towards other Christians. There are many such "one another" responsibilities in the Bible. Of course, Christians should also love non-Christians and even their enemies. But today we are learning about Christian fellowship, that is, about how Christians should relate to one another. The standard of Christian fellowship is always "to love one another as Christ loved us". Christ not only commands us to love other Christians, but also enables us to love them. In Romans 5:5 is written that God pours his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit!
Summary. Christian fellowship is a close fellowship with God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is also a close fellowship with other Christians in which every Christian has specific "one another" responsibilities.

(S) **POINT 3. THE “ONE ANOTHER” RESPONSIBILITIES**

Let us discover together the different “one another” responsibilities written in the Bible and discuss how we could apply each responsibility in a practical way. But first I would like to say very clearly that no Christian can apply all of these responsibilities at the same time and no Christian should apply all these responsibilities at the same time. All of us are growing. Therefore, choose one or two responsibilities and practise them for some time in your life.

The “one another” responsibilities can be divided into three main groups. The first group of responsibilities deal with our attitudes. The second group of responsibilities deal with our speaking. And the third group of responsibilities deal with our actions. But all these “one another” responsibilities are summed up in just one responsibility, namely, “Love one another as Christ loved you”. This key responsibility has therefore many different aspects and many different practical applications. Let me read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

(T) **The first group of “one another” responsibilities deal with Christian attitudes.**

Let us take turns to discover what the responsibility is and try to suggest some possible applications of that responsibility. Romans 12:10 says, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love”. The “one another” responsibility is *to be devoted to one another in brotherly love*. A possible application of this responsibility is to always reserve my close and intimate relationships for Christians only. I cannot share my tender affections and my deep spiritual unity with non-Christians.

(S) Romans 12:10 says, “Honour one another above yourselves”. The “one another” responsibility is *to honour one another above yourself*. A possible application of this responsibility is to always regard the good deeds of another Christian as done from good motives. Unless a consistent evil pattern is clearly evident, I should not be suspicious of his motives and thus dishonour him.

(T) Romans 13:8-10 says, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law...Love does no harm to its neighbour.” The “one another” responsibility is *to love and thus not to harm one another*. One possible application of this responsibility is not to harm another person’s marriage by meddling with his or her marriage partner and instead to preserve the sacredness of their marriage relationship. Other possible applications of this responsibility are not to murder, but instead to help my neighbour keep alive and well. Not to steal, but instead to protect my neighbour’s possessions. Not to covet, but instead to rejoice in the fact that my neighbour possesses those things. Only in this positive way do Christians fulfil the responsibilities of God’s moral commandments.

(S) Romans 15:1-7 says, “We who are strong ought to bear the failings of the weak,... Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up.... Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you”. The “one another” responsibility is *to accept one another, just as Christ accepted us*. A possible application of this responsibility is not just to tolerate my neighbour’s failings, but also to put my shoulder under his failings and help him carry them! According to Romans 14:1-3, the strong must not look down upon the weak and the weak may not condemn the strong. The weak Christians and the strong Christians must accept and welcome one another. They must please one another and build one another up.

(T) Colossians 3:13 says, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you”. The “one another” responsibility is *to forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another*. Some possible applications of this responsibility are to forgive others as the Lord forgave me, to forgive seventy times seven times every day and to forgive my neighbour from my heart.

(S) **The second group of “one another” responsibilities deal with Christian speaking.**

Let us again take turns to discover what the responsibility is and try to suggest some possible applications of that responsibility. Romans 14:13 says, “Let us stop passing judgement on one another”. The “one another” responsibility is *to stop passing judgement on one another*. Some possible applications of this responsibility are that the weak must stop criticising the strong and the strong must stop finding fault with the weak. Christians must not force all the other Christians to practice their faith in exactly the same way as they themselves do. With regard to what kinds of food is appropriate to eat, what kind of days should be special days, etc. Christians must respect a diversity of opinions. Each group should rather help the other group to become more effective witnesses for Christ.

(T) 1 Corinthians 1:10 says, “I appeal.... that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.” The “one another” responsibility is *to agree with one another*. The word in the original means “to restore or make complete something that was broken”. A possible application of this responsibility is to restore the broken relationships

and divisions in the church by developing the same biblical convictions. The best way to develop the same biblical convictions is to pray together regularly and to do Bible Study together regularly.

(S) Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom." The "one another" responsibility is *to teach one another*. The calling and duty to teach does not only belong to the pastors and leaders of the church, but to every Christian. Christians should teach one another. Some possible applications of this responsibility is to share your quiet times to one another, to do Bible study together, to give ordinary Christians a chance to give testimonies during the church meetings and to let Christians, who are able, teach and preach during the church services.

(T) Hebrews 3:12-13 says, "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'today', so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness". The "one another" responsibility is *to encourage one another*. A possible application of this responsibility is to watch one another's life especially in the areas of continuing sin, doubt and disobedience, which causes hardening. And to stimulate one another to holy living, faith in God's Word and immediate obedience.

(S) Hebrews 10:24 says, "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds". The "one another" responsibility is *to spur one another on to love and good works*. A possible application of this responsibility is to arouse and provoke one another to loving relationships and to practical tasks that benefit others. I believe that this responsibility is very important. It deals with relationships and not just with activities.

(T) Hebrews 10:25 says, "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. The "one another" responsibility is *to encourage one another to meet together*. A possible application of this responsibility is to stimulate one another to participate in at least one regular Christian meeting every week in which everyone is spurred on to love and to good works.

(S) The third group of "one another" responsibilities deal with Christian actions.

John 13:14 says, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet." The "one another" responsibility is *to wash one another's feet*. One possible application is to be willing to serve where no one else is willing or able to do the task. Another possible application is to be quick to see other people's needs and to do something that meets those needs.

(T) 1 Corinthians 12:25 says, "There should be no division in the body, but its parts should have equal concern for each other." The "one another" responsibility is *to have equal concern for each other*. A possible application is to use your God-given abilities and opportunities to serve other Christians who especially need your service, your talent or your spiritual gift. Maybe it is mercy that you show to the disabled. Maybe it is money that you share with those who preach the gospel.

(S) Galatians 5:13 says, "Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather serve one another in love". The "one another" responsibility is *to serve one another in love*. A possible application is not to use my freedom to do what I like to do, but to do what God commands and to do whatever will help others.

(T) Galatians 6:2 and 5 says, "Carry each other's burdens". But "Each one should carry his own load". The "one another" responsibility is *to carry each other's burdens, but not each other's loads*. On the one hand, a person's "burden" could be a severe temptation to sin, a difficult experience, like sickness or the loss of a beloved or persecution by some enemy. On the other hand, a person's "load" is his own thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, needs, choices, values and what he does with his time, possessions, talents, body and behaviour. A possible application is the following. While I am responsible to help carry as best as I can the tragedies, crises and losses of others, I am not responsible to carry their responsibilities for their own lives. I should never seek to control another person's life. But I should help him when he falls into sin or suffers persecution.

(S) 1 Peter 4:9 says, "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling". The "one another" responsibility is *to offer hospitality to each other without grumbling*. A possible application is to give lodging and food to Christian workers from other places or to needy brothers and sisters in my area.

(T) Summary. Christian fellowship consists of "one another" responsibilities in the attitudes of your heart, in the words of your mouth and in the actions of your behaviour.

(S) **POINT 6. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Set goals. As a local church or a discipleship group, choose one responsibility and practise it as a group and as individuals for say a couple of months. Act a play. Divide into groups of three or four people and each group prepare an act for about two minutes about one of the "one another" responsibilities.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www. etc.

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".