

EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH –Oct. 2023

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WELCOMING GONE WRONG

It is common for churches, in general, to promote that their church is a place where everyone is WELCOME! But without qualification that is to the detriment of the church. The right hand of fellowship is NOT to be extended to everyone. We are not to welcome false teachers into the fellowship. We are not to be in fellowship with the immoral or purveyors of darkness. Believers are not to have fellowship with unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 6:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

Some professing Christians with little or no discernment seem to think that being loving means tolerating almost any and everything. Love to them means “skating along to get along.” They don’t properly understand Christian love, biblical fellowship, or the call to holiness.

The word FELLOWSHIP is derived from the Greek word “koinonia”. It refers to things held in common. For true born-again believers in Christ the most basic common denominator of our fellowship is our “like precious faith” (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:1). Any level of true Christian fellowship demands that we hold to the same gospel and have the same saving faith (Gal. 1:8-9). As believers we share in the unity of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:3-6), and all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Christian fellowship is the bond and unity that ONLY true believers share in Christ. We are the family of God and are called to be a HOLY family.

The FELLOWSHIP of Christians is a HOLY FELLOWSHIP. We share in the holiness of God and are called to live holy lives (1 Pet. 1:15-16). The word “holy” means “to be set apart”. Biblical holiness involves separation from sin and the world (Rom. 12:1-2). We are positionally sanctified (set apart) in Christ and in practice are in the process of being sanctified (Heb. 10:14).

As God’s people, we are to love the lost evangelistically. Yes, we love them in that we seek their highest good – which is that they would be right with God through a repentant faith. But in that love, we must NEVER compromise our stand on God’s TRUTH! If an unbeliever comes in among us, the convicting presence of God should be so strong that “falling down on his face he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.” (1 Cor. 14:24-25). So much for making concessions to their worldliness! Instead of being affirming and accepting of their worldly ways the reality of the living God in our lives is to be a clear line of demarcation.

Ephesians 5:11 says to Christians, “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” Jude 23 says, “others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.” Yes, we are to love the lost evangelistically, but the right hand of fellowship is reserved for those who share in our “most holy faith” (Gal. 2:9; Jude 20).

Historically the FUNDAMENTALISTS were those who uncompromisingly held to the fundamentals of the faith and demanded that Christian fellowship adhere to these truths. Then along came the EVANGELICALS who wanted to be “more welcoming”. They became so loose that now it is hard to even define what the term “Evangelical” means in terms of contemporary usage. Yes, we want to be “welcoming” in a qualified sense and love the lost evangelistically, but the right hand of fellowship belongs ONLY to fellow believers!

Thot: “It is easier to pull someone down from the table than to pull them up onto the table.”

Earnestly Contending, Pastor Dwight J. Oswald