

Fellowship and Recreation

By Fred E. Dennis

The two words that stand at the head of this article are certainly being bandied about with reckless abandon in these days. The word “fellowship” is being used without any regard to its connotation in the Bible. One preacher said it was getting so that when he heard the word “fellowship,” he could smell the coffee! If you use it in a Bible sense, you will smell no coffee. Brethren will provide for a recreation hall and call it a “fellowship hall.” Why not call it what it is?

Don't worry about fellowship. Just preach and teach the gospel and get people to walk in this light, and the fellowship will take care of itself. We have “full fellowship” when thus we walk. Maybe we had better read it: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another” (1John 1:7). Dear brethren, that is the “fellowship” that all Christians are interested in.

I can't find anything in the Bible about “recreation” or I would write a little on that. I suppose that folks need a little recreation, but this I know: that the church is not in the reaction and entertainment business. The great business of the church is to preach the gospel and care for the worthy poor. This “recreation business” should have no connections with the church in any way, either by public announcements, through church bulletins, gospel radio programs, etc. Providing recreation belongs to the home and to individuals and not to the church as such. It seems to me that some brethren have gone almost “stark crazy” and “hog wild” over these adjuncts which belong to the home. Let us keep them where they belong. And we hear much about our “youth problems” and “youth programs” and “youth meetings.”

Did they have any youth in the early days of the church? Folks back there were more prolific than they are now, but it seems the brethren were so busy going everywhere preaching the gospel that the “youth” created no special problem. It is my candid judgment that one of the greatest “problems” facing the youth of our day is the way that the “adults” behave in the church of God. In some places elders and preachers are leading the “parade” with their skating rinks, ball clubs, swimming parties, etc. Shame and more shame!

Brethren, let the church be the church. These are perilous times. May the good Lord help us to keep our feet on solid ground. Get busy with the old sword of the Spirit. (Bible Herald, August 15, 1956)

Choked with Worry

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” (Matt. 6:25).

According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, the word “worry” comes from an old English word which means literally “to choke or strangle.” Truthfully, that's what worry does to us. It chokes and strangles us, leaving us in a miserable, depressed condition. Worry is a self-imposed curse which can be avoided. Someone has rightly said, “If it's bad enough to worry about, it's bad enough to pray about.” Paul said, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

Using What God Has Given Us

A band director was having a lot of trouble with one of his drummers. He talked and talked with him, but performance didn't improve. Finally, in front of the whole orchestra, he tried

to shame him into improvement by saying: "When a musician just can't handle his instrument and doesn't improve when given help, they take away the instrument, give him two sticks, and make him a drummer."

A voice was heard from the percussion section: "And if he can't handle even that, they take away one of his sticks and make him the conductor."

It is a Biblical principle that if we are unable to handle the responsibility that God has given us, it can be taken away. Jesus told a parable in Matthew 25 about three servants who were given responsibility by their master and were told to make use of it while he was gone. When he returned, two of them had used their "talents" and one had not. Jesus concluded the parable by saying: "For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away" (Matt. 25:29).

We need constant reminders that all we have has been given to us by God to use for His glory. It is an exciting thought to realize that as we use what God has given us, He will bless us with increasing opportunities for service. On the other hand, it is a sobering thought to realize that if we fail to make use of what we have been given, we will lose what we presently have. So what are we doing with what God has given us?

How Gullible Are We?

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26, 1997. He was attempting to show how conditioned we have become to the alarmists practicing junk science and spreading fear of everything in our environment. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." And for plenty of good reasons, since it has the potential to:

- 1) Cause excessive sweating and vomiting,
- 2) It is the major component in acid rain,
- 3) It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state,
- 4) Accidental inhalation can kill,
- 5) It contributes to erosion,
- 6) It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes,
- 7) It has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients.

He asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical dihydrogen monoxide. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided, and only one knew that the chemical dihydrogen monoxide was... WATER!!! The title of his prize winning project was, "How Gullible Are We?" The conclusion is obvious.

Religion is another area where people tend to be gullible. Extreme examples can be found in David Koresh's followers and the Heaven's Gate cult. But it can happen anytime we believe someone without checking God's Word to see if what is taught is the truth. Faith does not mean blindly accepting whatever anyone (including preachers) says. John warned, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1John 4:1). Use God's Word to discern between what is true and what is false. And if you feel like living dangerously today, pour yourself a big tall glass of dihydrogen monoxide.