

Small Group Discussion Guide

Philippians 1:3-7

“Making Connections”

Based on Sunday's
Sermon 6/28/2026

Background

“In recent years, many Christian leaders and pastors have begun to emphasize the importance of community among believers. This is a much-needed corrective to our tendency toward an individualistic approach to the Christian life, but it does raise the question What is biblical community? And is there a biblical basis for using the word community in our Christian context? *Koinōnia*, in its different grammatical forms, is actually translated several ways in the New Testament: for example, *participation*, *partnership*, *sharing*, and of course *fellowship*. In our Christian circles, the word *fellowship* has come to mean little more than Christian social activity. It may mean the exchange of pleasantries over coffee and cookies at church, or the social functions of our high school or campus ministry groups. This is not the meaning of fellowship in the New Testament.

Those first Christians of Acts 2 were not devoting themselves to social activities but to a relationship—a relationship that consisted of sharing together the very life of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They understood that they had entered this relationship by faith in Jesus Christ, not by joining an organization. And they realized that their fellowship with God logically brought them into fellowship with one another. Through their union with Christ, they were formed into a spiritually organic community. They were living stones being built into a spiritual house (see 1 Peter 2:5), fellow members of the body of Christ. As William Hendriksen said, “Koinonia, then, is basically a community-relationship.” It is not primarily an activity; it is a relationship.¹”

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. Share a time when you and someone else teamed up for something meaningful and it went better because you did it together.

Observation

2. What are the key words or themes that you notice in Philippians 1:3-7?
3. How does Paul describe his emotional posture toward the Philippians?

¹ Jerry Bridges, *True Community* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 1–3.

4. What does Paul say the Philippians have been doing “from the first day until now”?

Interpretation

5. What is the “good work” God began in them?

6. How is biblical *koinonia* more than social connection or friendship?

7. In what ways does Paul define fellowship as shared mission, shared grace, and shared perseverance?

8. Read Acts 2:42-47. How is fellowship to be understood in the early church based on this passage?

Application

9. Explain some of the misunderstandings of what fellowship is and how we can make our time together as the body of Christ more meaningful?

10. What would it look like to move from “friendly community” to “Gospel partnership?”

Prayer List: