

STRONGER CHURCHES

MODULE 10 Fellowship

FACILITATOR GUIDE



OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Understand the development of healthy relationships between members and the community.
2. Value the development of healthy relationships between members and the community.
3. Promote the development of healthy relationships between members and the community.

TIME FOR SHARING & PRAYER

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

– Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)

How is fellowship between brothers and sisters in Christ demonstrated in these verses?

DO: Welcome the group back.

SAY: In a few minutes we will take time to review your hard work, ask questions, and share with one another.

Today's module is called Fellowship

By the end of this module, the participants will be able to:

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2. Value the development of healthy relationships between members and the community.
3. Promote the development of healthy relationships between members and the community.

TIME FOR SHARING & PRAYER

SAY: Before we get too far in the module, we would like to spend some time in God's Word and to give some opportunities for testimonies and prayer. Let's begin.

ASK: Who would like to read Acts 2:46-47?

How is fellowship between brothers and sisters demonstrated in these verses?

SAY: History tells us that the fellowship described in this passage continued to be demonstrated in the early Church. Tertullian, a second-century Christian apologist from North Africa, wrote the following about the community of believers:

"Look how they love each other. Look how they are decided to die for one another."

This testifies to the intimate communion between believers in the first centuries after Christ. It is a virtue we should continue to imitate.

When the community where the church resides sees this virtue, naturally it gains favor in the eyes of people and some will be attracted to participate in this local body of believers.

Session 1: Biblical Foundation

COMMUNION | Acts 2:42

Communion = unity (*koinonia*); a oneness which reflects the unity or oneness of the Father and Jesus, His Son.

THE TRINITY, THE MODEL FOR COMMUNION AND UNION FOR THE CHURCH | John 17:21-23

We believe God is Triune—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God, in the depth of His being, forms the first and perfect community, expressed by diversity in unity. Man is made in the image of God; therefore, it is logical to think that we too have been made to live in community. We are designed in this way by the Creator and with purpose.

Before we get to the process of learning how to have healthy fellowship, would anyone like to share a testimony or information on the report on how God has transformed you or someone else in your community?

DO: Collect Healthy Church Reports and have participants report on implementing their action plans from the previous module.

DO: Pray.

Session 1: Biblical Foundation

DO: Read this Rick Warren quote:

Healthy things grow
Growing things change
Changing things challenge us
Challenge forces us to trust God
Trusting God leads to obedience
Obedience makes us healthy
Healthy things grow.
- Rick Warren

SAY: **COMMUNION** | Acts 2:42

They persevered in the doctrine of the apostles, in communion with one another, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer.

Communion = unity (*koinonia*); a oneness which reflects the unity or oneness of the Father and Jesus, his Son.

In Philippians 1:27 and 1 Peter 3:8, we can see that communion/unity must exist between believers, calling attention to the harmony that results in a good testimony before the non-believers. When there are bad relationships between its members, the church will develop a poor reputation in its community.

THE TRINITY, THE MODEL FOR COMMUNION AND UNION FOR THE CHURCH | John 17:21-23

ASK: Who would like to read John 17:21-23?

SAY: We believe God is Triune—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God, in the depth of His being, forms the first and perfect community, expressed by diversity in unity. Man is made in the image of God; therefore, it is logical to think that we too have been made to live in community. We are designed in this way by the Creator and with purpose.

The first community, the Triune God, calls the church to be in fellowship and practice community. Look at John 17 (often referred to as Jesus' "high priestly" prayer), and note one of Jesus' primary petitions of the Father:

The first community, the Triune God, calls the church to be in and make community.

JESUS AND COMMUNION WITH HIS DISCIPLES | John 13:35

When Jesus calls His disciples to “come, follow me” (Matthew 4:19), a close and committed relationship with Him is being offered and required. By selecting twelve disciples, He creates a special community. The love that He always showed His disciples was obvious and John highlights this same love as he begins his narrative of the Last Supper (what the Church today refers to as *communion*) (John 13:1).

COMMUNION BETWEEN THE FIRST BELIEVERS | Acts 2:42, 44, 46

- We share God's grace.
- What we give, we also have in common.

²¹ “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

This is awesome! The bond of unity and love between the Father and the Son are the foundation of the request for us to experience a similar bond. Our communion and unity between God and us, His followers, is not an end in itself; rather, it has a missional purpose — “so the world believes and knows Him” through our unity in love.

This relationship is dynamic, interactive, loving, and serving. It forms the model for the life of love in the church.

SAY: JESUS AND COMMUNION WITH HIS DISCIPLES | John 13:35

When Jesus calls his disciples to “come, follow me” (Matthew 4:19), a close and committed relationship with him is being offered and required. By selecting twelve disciples, he creates a special community. The love that he always showed his disciples was obvious, and John highlights this same love as he begins his narrative of the Last Supper (what the Church today refers to as *communion*) (John 13:1).

This same quality of love between His disciples would be the distinctive characteristic of His disciples — “*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*” John 13:35 (NIV).

Throughout the formation (discipleship) of His disciples, Christ establishes loving communion as the standard for His followers and Church for all times.

COMMUNION BETWEEN THE FIRST BELIEVERS | Acts 2:42, 44, 46

Communion between the first Christians refers to two complimentary truths.

We share God's grace.

The apostle John begins his first letter with these words: “our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ...” Paul also talks about the communion we have with the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:1-2). In these texts we see that authentic communion is with the Triune community of God. We, as believers, participate in fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

What we give, we also have in common.

In Acts 2:44, Luke emphasizes this, using this same word (*koinonia*) to refer to any offerings being given to meet the needs of the early church. Believers shared to the extent that they had all things in common or in community.

COMMUNION IN PAUL'S AND JOHN'S LETTERS |

Read Philippians 1:4-5

Read Philippians 2:1-2

Read 1 John 1:3

Read 1 John 1:6-7

What aspects of communion are mentioned in these biblical citations?

COMMUNION IN PAUL'S AND JOHN'S LETTERS | Philippians 1:4-5

In the following passages, we see how Paul and John express communion: Philippians 1:4-5; Philippians 2:1-2; 1 John 1:3; 1 John 1:6-7.

ASK: What aspects of communion are mentioned in these biblical citations?

SAY: Healthy communities reflect the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity.

This relationship is dynamic, interactive, loving, and serving. It forms the model for the life of love in the church.

Session 2: Tools

PROMOTING COMMUNION

Good communion through the ministry of the church will not happen automatically nor spontaneously. We need to learn to use and continue to perfect some simple, effective tools for meeting this goal. Next, we will suggest some tools we encourage you to put into practice.

SMALL GROUPS AS STAGES FOR COMMUNION

Small, well-organized groups that follow a meeting agenda create an environment that encourages intimate and growing communion. These meetings help people talk and be heard, which means we must learn to be still and listen when others talk. Periodically, disagreements will occur. When they take place, follow the conflict resolution tool P.A.T.I.N.

P.A.T.I.N. | CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Problem - identify specific problems or issues

Approach kindly - practice graciousness

Time and place - that allows adequate time and place to speak confidentially (if needed)

Interests in common - that are positive for both parties

Negotiation - look for win-win results

Developing the skill to effectively communicate with others is of vital importance. It is a kind of communion between believers that becomes contagious. It welcomes others to be part of the communion, learning together Christlikeness in order to contribute to His mission in the world.

As part of the discipleship process for everyone, we must teach, by a variety of means, how believers can relate in a healthy way with others motivated by the love of Christ. That way we can bring reconciliation and forgiveness to broken relationships from the past and to new and future relationships that will be cultivated.

EVALUATING OUR HEALTHY COMMUNION

The following tool uses a 1-10 scoring system, in which 1 represents complete disagreement or the lowest score, and 10 represents excellence or strong agreement

SAY: Let's review our Take Your Church's Pulse measurement result for this healthy characteristic. Was this an area of strength for our church or is this an area of weakness? Are there certain questions from the survey that we should pay special attention to as we prepare our action plan?

HEALTHY COMMUNION											
1.	Church ministries allow their members to grow in friendship and to relate with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.	Guests and new members receive a warm and intentional welcome to the church.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3.	When someone visits our church, they receive follow-up that same week.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4.	Our church offers counseling and pastoral care to its members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5.	In our church there is a feeling of positive comradeship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6.	The members of our church visit each other and gather to share meals regularly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7.	Conflicts in our church are resolved biblically.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Session 3: Action Plan and Goals

Based on what you learned in this module, create an action plan with clear goals for you and your local church.

For Pastors:

Have you identified a leader to mentor as a future church planter? Y or N

If yes, did you meet this month? Y or N

For Review:

Did you turn in the Healthy Church Report this month? Y or N

Look at the 7 Take Your Church's Pulse (TYCP) questions for this module (Session 4) and review your overall measurements.

What are your areas of strength (scores greater than 7)? _____

What are areas for growth (scores equal to or fewer than 7)? _____

Begin to develop an action plan. An action plan for implementing today's materials into your respective ministries is important and should be a habitual process for every step forward in your ministry. Based on what you learned in this module, create an action plan with clear goals for you and your local church.

An acronym that is helpful in planning is to develop **SMART** goals:

Specific: It describes specifically what I plan to do.

Measurable: I will be able to tell whether it was done or not.

Appropriate: Is it in line with God's will?

Realistic: It considers my limitations and availability.

Time-bound: It mentions an exact time period.

Example:

- By the end of the month, I will preach a sermon on integrated faith so that people will realize that God should be a part of every portion of life.
- By the end of the year, financial giving will increase by 5% from the previous year.
- In 6 months, 12 new believers will be saved.
- By next week, we will develop a plan for small groups that will start next fall.

Coming Up: Stronger Churches Module 11

You will reflect on the elements of good biblical and healthy worship. You will guide your church to a biblical, more profound understanding of worship. You will develop contextualized and multifaceted worship practices in your local church.

Healthy Church Report	MONTHLY GOAL	MONTHLY RESULT
SHARED THE VISION How many people inside and outside the church has the vision been shared with?		
LEADERS How many leaders has the church trained for small groups and ministry?		
SPIRITUAL GIFTS How many people has the church trained to use their spiritual gifts?		
TITHE How many people has the church asked to tithe toward the mission of the church?		
PRAYER How many people has your church prayed for in the community?		
SHARE FAITH How many people has the church trained to share their faith?		
SMALL GROUPS How many people has the church brought into small groups?		
COMMUNITY MINISTRIES How many people has the church brought into ministries that serve the community?		
NEW MEMBERS How many people has the church welcomed into relationships in the church?		
WORSHIP How many people has the church invited to worship each week at your church?		

How to Use Reports

- 1. REPORTING** - Included in each module is a tabulation sheet with ten metrics for measuring entitled *Healthy Church Report*. As the participant progresses through the modular training a new measurement is revealed on the tabulation sheet for monthly reporting. Monthly reporting is a key part of the training. This provides accountability and focus on what matters most for the training participants. If the participants know ahead of time what will be asked of them at the next module, they are more likely to do those activities that lead to the results to be reviewed.
- 2. PASTOR TRACK MENTORING** - Pastors are encouraged during the training to identify and mentor a future leader to be a church planter. Each month of the modular training the pastor is asked if a leader has been identified and if they have met for mentoring (see www.multiplicationnetwork.org/resources/ministry-toolbox/203-mentoring-workshop-2 for mentor training material). At the end of the Stronger Churches modular training: Pastors are encouraged to turn in a church planter profile report (<https://www.multiplicationnetwork.org/resources/ministry-toolbox/159-church-planter-profile>) and churches are encouraged to plant a church by sending the new leader for More Churches Modular training.