

MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER

Clearly our Lord places a very high priority on our relationship with our fellow man. Jesus said the law and prophets hang on two commandments with the second being "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (Matt. 22:39b). We can learn from numerous 'one another' passages that the relationship between brothers and sisters in Christ is even more meaningful and closer than required by the second great commandment. In view of our Lord's emphasis on our relationship with one another, how would you characterize your relationship with other members of the congregation? Do you consider yourself part of a Christ-owned brotherhood or are you "just friends" with whom you attend Bible classes and worship services?

The Lord's church is sometimes referred to as a brotherhood without much consideration of the quality of the relationship between the members. A tight-knit brotherhood is one in which its members share (1) a common cause and common goal(s) and (2) the members have care and concern for those who share the common cause and goals. Our common cause/goals are our love of God as expressed in our desire to be Christ-like in every way, everyday. This is best understood when we see the "singleness of mind" that Paul expressed in Phil. 2:2, Rm. 8:38-39, 1 Cor. 2:2, and 4:10. The two passages cited in first Corinthians, "*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*" and "*We are fools for Christ's sake---*", seems to best express this focus on Christ our Savior.

Couple this singleness of mind with a genuine love for our brothers and sisters in the congregation and we will be the Christ-owned brotherhood God wants us to be. We accomplish the second requirement of having a Christ-owned brotherhood when we follow the simple admonition found in Phil. 2:3-4, "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for your own interest, but also for the interest of others.*"

When we fully understand who we are, and whose we are, and at the same time have a genuine care and concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ, we will have obeyed the two great commandments cited by Jesus in Matt. 22:37-39, and in addition, we will be a Christ-owned brotherhood of Christians.

A Christ-owned brotherhood doesn't just happen. It is made when each of us take our commitment to God very seriously. Being a brother or sister is much more rewarding than being "just friends".

For the elders,
Don Denton