

# Pastor's Pen

***And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42***

Merriam-Webster defines fellowship as community of interest, activity, feeling, or experience. The New Testament word for "fellowship," *koinonia*, expresses the idea of being together for mutual benefit. Hebrews 10:24-25 shares this idea, saying, "*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*" There are several reasons fellowship with other believers is crucial for all believers.

First, it expresses love to one another. Jesus told His disciples, "*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*" (John 13:35). The love Christians have for one another can influence others toward faith in Jesus Christ. It is very difficult to show love for one another if not in fellowship.

Second, it promotes unity. When we have fellowship with one another we can put into practice what God desires of His people, unity. "*That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*" 1 John 1:3

Third, Christian fellowship gives us the ability to pray together. We can and should pray individually. Jesus is our example, *In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God* (Luke 6:12). But, there are times that we need to pray together (Acts 4:23-41).

It is my deepest desire to see each of you and to greet you just as the New Testament Saints did. However, we are restricted by Government authorities from doing so at this time. During these trying and difficult times, God has made away for us to continue to have fellowship with one another. We have been live streaming our services and conducting Zoom Bible studies. This past week we held our first drive in church service. This week we will be live streaming our Sunday School hour at 9:00 AM and Worship Service at 10:30 AM.

## \*\*\*\* Important Announcement\*\*\*\*

I am excited to announce that starting on the last Sunday of this month April 26, 2020 we will be having drive in church every Sunday morning. During the Spring we will stay with a 10:30 am start time. We will continue to live stream the services from the parking lot. During the service on the 26<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate the Lords Supper together. Please bring bread and juice to celebrate in your cars. I am thankful that God has provided for us a way to remain in fellowship with one another during these unprecedented times. Myself, the other pastors, and elders are here for you. Please let me know how we can minister to you and your families.

Your Shepherd,  
Pastor Mark

# Grace Gems

Holy Kiss!

**Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. Romans 16:16**

Paul tells the church four times — the Romans, the Corinthians, the Thessalonians — to greet one another with a holy kiss. And Peter says to greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14). And I would say that has at least three implications for us.

It doesn't seem to me that Paul and Peter tell the church to greet one another with a holy kiss, meaning: You dare not even see one another without kissing one another. It is not that kind of rule. For instance: If you walk out of this room while we are having tea and you walk back into the room, I need to greet you with a kiss. Or if I see you between classes at 9:00, I need to kiss you and if I see you after that class as we are walking down the hall, I need to kiss you again. Paul and Peter were not prescribing that kind of precisions.

They were saying: Take the physical, familial expression of endearment and use it in a way that is holy to express your love for one another. And he didn't prescribe that it had to be done every single time you see one another fresh for the full time. He just said: Use it. Use it. Do it. And I think that we would do well to think of ways that we might include a holy kiss in our greetings, especially perhaps for very dear friends after very long absences. And I am mainly thinking of people of the same sex here, because I think you have to be so careful with kissing people of the opposite sex.

There are two men in my life who kiss me when I see them. I don't see them but once or twice a year, and they kiss me on the cheek after these months of separation. Only two. There used to be three, and now my father is in heaven. And frankly, it means a great deal to me that these brothers put a kiss on my cheek. Both of them are manly, thoughtful, self-controlled guys. It means one thing: "You, John Piper, are precious to me. I value our friendship very highly though we don't see each other very often." That is what it means.

Second, what Paul and Peter are making plain here is to stress that the ordinary kiss — and it is just an ordinary word for kiss — should be made holy by the Christian church rather than being abandoned. So there is a lesson here for us. He says "a holy kiss."

## Quote of the Week

"When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops studying the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy."

~ Corrie Ten Boom

Kissing is not uniquely Christian. It is not a uniquely Christian affection. And what the apostles say is: Take it from the world and sanctify it. Make it holy. Devote it to God. Make it say something about the Holy One. Include God in your hearts and in your thoughts when you greet one another with this ordinary, culturally common greeting.

It seems similar to 1 Timothy 2:8 where Paul says that he wants the men to pray lifting holy hands. I think the main point there is not that everywhere and at all times in the church where there is prayer, the men must have their hands in the air. Surely there are times when other postures would also be appropriate. The point is: When you lift your hands, they should be holy hands in prayer.

So when the kiss of affection is given to a brother in Christ it should not be sensual or manipulative or offensive or hypocritical or in any way pretending to express affection that is not really there. It shouldn't hide any sin in our lives. It should be a holy kiss. So the lesson we can learn here is, whatever means of expressing greetings, let them be genuine. Right now, what do you do? Ball up your fist and hit somebody's knuckles. So I think what the apostles want to do is encourage us to use various culturally appropriate symbols of greeting and sanctify them and make them holy. What do we do? We ball up our fists and we do fist bumps with each other. I hardly ever know what to do.

"Fist bump with a holy fist bump." TweetShare on Facebook Somebody makes a fist at me and I think: Oh yeah, I am supposed to punch you on the fist. What is that? I don't know where that comes from or what that is, but I do it and I think Paul would look at that and he would say: I encourage all of you guys — I don't know whether women do this or not — I encourage all of you guys to fist bump with a holy fist bump. That this what he is getting at. Take the culturally appropriate means of showing brotherhood or camaraderie or affection and make them holy.

Third and finally, I suspect — and this is the main point — that Christians should feel genuine affection for one another. I have been reading 1 Peter a lot lately and really been impressed, because I am teaching it to the seminary guys. And it seems to me that Peter is writing to a persecuted, beleaguered church trying to encourage them how to live as exiles in a vast sea of unbelievers who are being very hostile to them. And he is laboring to help them not just show dutiful, sacrificial love to each other, but rather to feel earnest, heartfelt affection to one another. I think that is why he says at the end: Kiss one another with a kiss of love. So 1 Peter 1:22 says, "Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart." Those words are so beyond "treat each other nice" — way beyond that. He is calling for Christians to really have changes of heart so that when we approach another Christian, our hearts are drawn out in words like this.

This is 1 Peter 3:8: "Have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind." I mean, three of those — sympathy, brotherly love, tender heart — imply how warm and tender and gentle and kind and affectionate we should be towards brothers and sisters in Christ. Those are amazing words. And that is what Peter wants to see happen. And I think that is really what is behind both Peter and Paul saying that we should use a holy kiss. He wants us to be demonstrative in real affections and that is what we should seek to grow in.

- John Piper



# Weekly Gatherings



## Bible Classes

Discipleship Class  
With Brian Patrick  
Sunday Morning @ 9am



## Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM  
Men's Zoom Meeting

Tuesdays | 7PM  
Women's Zoom Meeting



## Job Study

Wednesdays @ 7PM  
Teaching Series



## Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team and forgot to sign up, please contact the team leader at the appropriate email address.



## Children's Studies

Pastor Jamie Preschool, Elementary  
& Youth Studies with Caleb Capps



## Service Times

Sunday School 9:00 AM  
Sunday Service 10:30 AM

### Giving from service on 04.12.20

General Offering .....	12,806.93
Building Fund .....	1,877.60
Benevolence .....	620.00
Annie Armstrong .....	.230.00
Foundations .....	.50.00
Uganda Missions .....	405.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>15,989.53</b>
Attendance ...10 present	
69 online connections	
64 cars @ Sunrise service	

## Got Questions

- Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org
- AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org
- Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org
- Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org
- Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org
- Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org
- Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org
- Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org
- Maintenance-maintenance @ghbcva.org
- Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org
- Communications-communications@ghbcva.org
- Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org
- Security-security@ghbcva.org



ghbcva.org | 804.561.3742  
9821 South Redfield Drive, Amelia, VA 23002

# Grace Harvest Baptist Church

April 19, 2020

