

A feeling of fellowship

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They wanted to learn more about Christian Science healing. So I invited the two women to attend church with me and my husband. For several Sundays we would meet them in the foyer and sit with them during the service. Afterward, we would speak briefly, then go our separate ways for another week. From my perspective, it all seemed to be going well.

*Then, one Sunday, the women asked
if this was all there was to church
- just "hi" and "bye."
They'd thought there would be more.*



Their question surprised me. What "more" had they been expecting? As I drove home from church that day, I looked back over my 45 years of church attendance. There had been a lot of just saying hello and goodbye on Sundays, and it had never bothered me.

Then I realized something. I had always attended church with close relatives. We'd supported each other's interest in Christian Science, and had nurtured our relationship by spending time together. That love for each other and regular fellowship had certainly enhanced my church experience. I'd never felt alone.

Over the years I'd been grateful to feel God's companionship, as well as that of my family members at church. Were these women desiring that same sense of family fellowship - closeness with others who were on a similar spiritual journey; the feeling of belonging to a community of people who cared about them? If so, then the next question was, What could I do?

That afternoon, as I prayed to God for His inspiration, I decided to research *fellowship* and related words. Two passages in the Bible stood out to me:

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly" (Proverbs. 18:24) and, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father" (I John 1:3).

These reminded me that friendship and caring spring from the love that God has for all His children. Because I had a close family association with Him, I also had this with others. As the likeness of a nurturing and compassionate God, it was natural for me to be considerate and kind to these women.

*During the week,
I listened for how I could show my friendliness.*

Saturday evening as I sat quietly looking out over my garden and praying, an initiative started to take shape in my thought.

- I could be more gracious and welcoming by offering fellowship - taking time to listen to them, answering questions, sharing my life experiences, healings, and inspiration, and being encouraging and supportive of their spiritual growth.

- Across the road from the church, at a transit center for buses and trains, there were several eating places. I thought I could invite them to go there with my husband and me after the Sunday service.

Next morning, after I'd sat with them in the service, the two women accepted my invitation to meet with us. It was so successful that now, 12 months on, there have been as many as 14 of us, sitting together in church and spending time together afterward.

*This kind of church fellowship has been rewarding.
It's even led to hope and healing.*

One time I noticed that someone new had started attending the Sunday service. She was shy and didn't seem to know anyone. I invited her to sit with us during church and to join us at the transit center afterward. Her life was full of problems, and she was very ill. Each Sunday, over freshly made hot donuts, those present shared their love, inspiration, and healing experiences with her. We encouraged her to know that with God's help, she could resolve her problems.



Eventually she stopped coming. We all missed her. But recently, quite unexpectedly, I met her at our local shopping center. She looked so different - smiling, confident, happy, well. She said she was so grateful for the church service and our fellowship, which had given her peace and met her need at a low point in her life.

We hope one day she revisits church and joins us again. In the meantime, I know that she will always have fellowship with her Father, and it will continue to sustain and strengthen her. It's an association that can never fade away, and it's one that someone can't leave or be left out of. We are all members of God's family, and, as we are learning, always within His circle of love and companionship.



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[Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures](#) by Mary Baker Eddy, is her textbook on Christian Science healing practice and her class textbook in teaching Christian Science healing.

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