PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

Materials:

-White board or chart paper
-Markers

WORKSHOP: FABULOUS FELLOWSHIP

by Jenifer Young

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: Fellowship is a very misunderstood virtue of our modern-day church in the Western world. An examination of what the Bible tells us about Fellowship and what God's concept is will help us understand our responsibility for stewarding fabulous fellowship in our homes, Christian gatherings and in our community.

CONTEXT: This material can be used for teacher training, the whole PWOC body, a board meeting, training day…

TIME: 60 minutes

HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: (5 minutes)

Note to Trainer: Feel free to insert your own story here. A personal example will more readily engage your participants. Your experiences and personal testimony are a big part of who you are as a trainer- share them!

Hank's Story:

Recently, my family took a trip to my hometown- Wellington, Kansas. After a day of lingering around my mother's home, and fixing all the little things that needed doing, like changing light bulbs and pulling weeds, we decided to take that inevitable trip to Walmart. There is really not a lot else to do in my hometown and Walmart is the community meeting hub to see who else is in town for the weekend. My husband, Hank, quickly tired of our quest for yarn and lettuce, and abandoned our search for more exciting fare in the Electronics Department.

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There was a vendor that day, something unusual (at least for our little Walmart). He did not have the typical Walmart vest; instead he had a shirt bearing his company logo. His name tag said "MOTO" and he was selling cameras, one of my Hank's passions. So Hank struck up a conversation with Moto right there in Walmart. They began discussing cameras, which led to a discussion on Japan where Moto came from and where Hank and I spent our first tour in the Air Force. That led to a discussion about the differences in our country which led Moto to ask some burning questions about God. My husband happens to be a retired Army Chaplain, but he was not wearing a clerical collar, didn't carry a big Bible, or have a flashing neon arrow over his head that spelled out "Ask me about Jesus." So why did Moto pick Hank to ask the question about God? I believe that Moto saw the light my husband has because of his *fabulous fellowship* with God; Moto sought that fellowship for himself. God set them up with a divine appointment, and Moto found Jesus that day in Walmart, of all places!

MAKE YOUR POINT 1: **What is "Fellowship?"**(10 minutes)

In this section, we will examine the concept of fellowship and come to an understanding of what the word truly means. We will explore our current opinions on the subject and compare those with the information we uncover about God's plan of fellowship.

Divide into groups of 2-3, depending on the number of people attending the workshop. Ask for ladies to share and record one-word responses to the question, "What is fellowship?"

Give small groups the opportunity to share their responses with the whole group, recording answers on half of the white board/ chart paper.

> *The responses of the small groups will give you a very good idea of their concept of "fellowship." You are gleaning information that you can use throughout the workshop. Building on their ideas and their words is a great way to involve your participants in the learning process and to help them assimilate new information with what they already know.*

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 1: (10 minutes)

Now ask each person to read the paragraph "Fabulous Fellowship" and mark what stands out to them:

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Fabulous Fellowship

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." 1John 1:7 (NKJV)

The principle of fellowship is described perfectly in this verse. It starts with us, individually, having a relationship with the Living God and walking in His light- as He has taught us to walk by His words, actions and by the Holy Spirit's guidance. As we walk in this light, our sin is covered by His blood- meaning we experience forgiveness and wholeness in His presence. If we walk outside of the light, we miss the fellowship with our Savior and tend to break off fellowship with our sisters and brothers because we are walking in darkness and not following the light. But we stay in fellowship if we are all in the light walking together with Jesus. Our walk in this light is attractive both to other believers and to non-believers as well (like Moto at Walmart).

Give your group the opportunity to share what they found interesting. Be sure to highlight the concept of "fellowship with God first" as this is key and essential for good leadership.

MAKE YOUR POINT 2: **Koinonia** (5 minutes)

Let's look at the Greek word for fellowship: *koinonia* (koy-nohn-ee-ah)

It is hard to get a grip on the original meaning in the Greek, but words that describe include: fellowship, partnership, communion, sharing (willing contribution) and even stewardship. It is *mutual relationship* with generosity at its core. *Koinonia* gives the picture of "doing life together" with a community that cares very deeply for one another.

Henry Blackaby and his son, Melvin, make this statement in their book *A God-Centered Church*:

"*Koinonia* receives the grace of God with a grateful heart and lets the resources of God flow through your life into the rest of God's family. The essence of the Church is found in the word *koinonia.*"

This statement shows that true biblical fellowship, *koinonia*, incorporates partnership as we allow our own lives to showcase God's grace to others around us, encouraging God's family and drawing in the lost. It shows how

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we are purposed to be stewards of this fellowship, allowing others to see and experience our personal relationship with God. In that sense, our "personal" relationship becomes a "public" relationship that can be an example and a blessing to others.

Francis Chan's BASIC series has a chapter devoted to Fellowship. In this section, he discusses Ephesians, chapter 2 at length. The beginning of this passage describes our state as a non-believer, how we once were disobedient and lived gratifying the cravings of our flesh, following its desires and thoughts. Verse 8 describes how we were saved by grace, through faith, which is a gift from God. This profound relationship with Christ has a unifying quality about it. As we walk out this "grace," our differences and disagreements with each other fall away and our unity in fellowship "rises to become a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:21).

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 2: (5 minutes)

So what is *koinonia* ? Give me one word that describes it.

Record responses to this on the other side of the white board/ chart paper. Spend a few minutes comparing and contrasting the results with the words describing "fellowship" on the other side of the board/ paper. Of course koinonia IS fellowship, so in that sense, the two columns should be the same. You will likely find that your participants share some deeper concepts for this second list. Do your best to connect those deeper concepts with the original responses to "What is Fellowship?"

Responses to look for include:

- Fellowship starts with our relationship with God and moves out to the body of believers and then to non-believers
- Our fabulous fellowship might attract someone who needs a divine appointment
- Even social events like potlucks can be a conduit of *koinonia* if true communion of hearts is taking place.
- Fellowship is God's plan- His program for keeping us strong in Him and attracting those who have not committed themselves to Him yet.

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MAKE YOUR POINT 3: **Experiencing Life Together** (5 minutes)

We were not meant to walk alone; we were made to have fabulous fellowship with God and with one another. Let's read these selections from chapter 18 of *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren:

"Experiencing Life Together" (Chapter 18)

> ***Life is meant to be shared. God intends for us to experience life together. The Bible calls this shared experience fellowship. Today, however, the word has lost most of its biblical meaning. 'Fellowship' now usually refers to casual conversation, socializing, food and fun.***
>
> ***Real fellowship is so much more than just showing up at services, it is experiencing life together. It includes unselfish loving, honest sharing, practical serving, sacrificial giving, sympathetic comforting and all the other 'one another' commands found in the New Testament.***
>
> ***In real fellowship, people experience authenticity, mutuality, sympathy and mercy.***

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 3: (15 minutes)

Let's examine what Scripture says about "Experiencing Life Together."

Have your participants break into small groups to examine a passage of Scripture together. Groups should be no more than four people; a smaller group gives everyone a voice. Ask them to read, and record their reactions and then give them the opportunity to share their responses with the whole group.

In your small groups, discuss the Scripture and questions and be prepared to share with the whole group.

<u>Scripture passages to examine in small groups:</u>

1. Philippians 2:1-4
2. Colossians 3:12-17
3. Hebrews 10:19-25
4. 1 John 1:1-7

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Discussion Questions:

1. How does this passage illustrate "fellowship" (*koinonia*) or "experiencing life together?"

2. What attracts you to a Christian group like PWOC?

3. What might make you stay away?

4. How can you bring *koinonia* to life in your PWOC, your chapel, your church, your leadership team or your Bible study group?

5. How do we make our gatherings attractive to our community?

Walk around while the groups are discussing. Affirm their ideas and help guide the conversations as needed. This will give you a much more complete picture of what is happening in their discussions and how much they have absorbed the concept of koinonia.

APPLY IT TO LIFE: (5 minutes)

In what area is God calling you to experience *koinonia* ? in your relationship with Him? with an individual? in your Bible study? on a leadership team? Ask Him to reveal a specific person, group or setting to you.

Record here at least one thing you can do this week to implement the concept of biblical fellowship, *koinonia,* in your own life:

You can give your participants the opportunity to share what they have written. This is a personal response, so be sure not to make anyone feel like they have to share.

Pray over the group. Ask God to help them implement whatever they have written down. Pray blessing over them.

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Resources:

- *Leadership Secrets of Jesus*- Mike Murdock
- *Just Walk Across the Room*- Bill Hybels
- *A God-Centered Church*- Henry and Melvin Blackaby
- *Finish the Mission*- John Piper and David Mathis
- *BASIC-We are Church* (video series)- Francis Chan
- *The Purpose-Driven Life*- Rick Warren

More Scripture to explore:

- John 17:20-23
- Acts 2: 42-47
- Romans 1:12
- Galatians 6:2
- I Thessalonians 1:2-10; 2:8; 5:11
- I Peter 1:22-23
- I John 4:7-16

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PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: Fellowship is a very misunderstood virtue of our modern-day church in the Western world. An examination of what the Bible tells us about Fellowship and what God's concept is will help us understand our responsibility for stewarding fabulous fellowship in our homes, Christian gatherings and in our community.

1. WHAT IS "FELLOWSHIP?"

- Answer the question "What is Fellowship?" in a group of no more than four people. Record some of your answers. You will have a chance to share your ideas with the whole group.

- Read the following paragraph "Fabulous Fellowship" and mark what stands out to you:

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Fabulous Fellowship

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II. KOINONIA (koy-nohn-ee-ah)

- "*Koinonia* receives the grace of God with a grateful heart and lets the resources of God flow through your life into the rest of God's family. The essence of the Church is found in the word *koinonia.*" (*A God-Centered Church,* Henry and Melvin Blackaby*)*

- Ephesians 2

- What is *koinonia* ?

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III. EXPERIENCING LIFE TOGETHER

- *Life is meant to be shared. God intends for us to experience life together. The Bible calls this shared experience fellowship. Today, however, the word has lost most of its biblical meaning. 'Fellowship' now usually refers to casual conversation, socializing, food and fun.*

  Real fellowship is so much more than just showing up at services, it is experiencing life together. It includes unselfish loving, honest sharing, practical serving, sacrificial giving, sympathetic comforting and all the other 'one another' commands found in the New Testament.

  In real fellowship, people experience authenticity, mutuality, sympathy and mercy. (*The Purpose-Driven Life-* chapter 18, Rick Warren)

- **Scripture passages to examine in small groups:**

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- **Discussion Questions:**

  1. How does this passage illustrate "fellowship" (*koinonia*) or "experiencing life together?"

  2. What attracts you to a Christian group like PWOC?

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APPLY IT TO LIFE:

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