One Heart & One Mind
Acts 4:32
One of the simplest and perhaps most vivid interpretations of “Fellowship”–is simply–a group of “fellows” (as they say) in the same boat or “ship.”

Understood this way, one can see the need for full participation.
Old Joke: Roman Galley Master informs the oarsmen he has some **Good news** and he has some **Bad news**.

- **Good news** = Double rations today…
- **Bad news** = Captain wants to go water-skiing after lunch.
Fellow-Ship

- But seriously, about four years ago we each set out on a voyage together.

- Our intended destination was a much deeper understanding of what it meant to be a Christ-ian.

- Our deepest desire has been to please God and be a genuine encouragement to our Brothers & Sisters in Christ.
It was not a simple voyage. It has taken a great deal of sincere study on all of our parts.


It has also taken the personal realization of just how truly vital this privilege of Christian Fellowship really is... and that it takes an entire crew or church that is willing to pull-together and to put forth the genuine effort to be a Fellowship like that.
Prioritized & Practiced.

- It’s not “natural” to live a Godly and righteous life. It is “super-natural.”
- It is Inspired by the Word of God.
- And the deeper we focus on living out the Word of God, the more it becomes our daily lifestyle.
And today, as I prepare to leave you, and perhaps not see you again until Heaven, I wanted to reinforce my conviction that what this church needs to do above all else is **STAY TRUE TO GOD AND FAITHFUL IN HIS FELLOWSHIP**.
Prioritized & Practiced.

Because while it’s not natural to “consider the needs of others as more important than your own,” (Phil. 2:4), and to “serve others above yourself,” (Gal. 5:13), it is God’s Will. And the longer we focus on living out His Will, the more it becomes our true ambition.
Over the last *several months* we have studied together from the *Book of Acts*. We won’t finish it together, but we’ve made a good start.

We have *primarily focused* on how the *people* of the Book, people like us, *Simple Christians*, devoted themselves to the Apostles’ Teaching, to Fellowship, to the Breaking of bread and to Prayer. (Acts 2:42).
And as noted, the word **Fellow-ship**, is pretty **self-descriptive**. It describes a band of people **ALL pulling together, all in one “Ship.”**

**A.T.I.C.**

All Things In Common

**ACTS 2:42**

fellowship of believers
All of the believers were together and they had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 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, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.”
One in Heart and Mind

- Notice how “together” they were.
- They were “All together.”
- They weren’t mere acquaintances.
- They were Brethren.
One in Heart and Mind

- *Fellowship* in the Early Church was basically essential: If not for *God’s sake*, then for *safety’s sake*.

- Being a *Christian* in the first century meant there as *a target on your back*.

- Their former Jewish Brethren saw them as *turncoats*, the *Greeks* saw them as *fools*, and the *Romans* as potential *insurrectionists*. 
So, it meant much more than just asking “How are you,” as they passed in the aisle.

It meant genuinely having the others back. And even more than that it meant having the same HEART and the same MIND – CHRIST’S!

The passage we read today from Acts 4 well illustrates the point;
Acts 4:32 – “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.”
One in Heart and Mind

The First Century Christians *shared everything* they had. They *shared* their incomes. They *shared* their protection. *They shared themselves.* *Their true selves...*

*They had One heart and One mind.*”

…They first gave *themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God...* (2 Cor. 8:5)
It was a true **UNITY** of faith... Sharing their forgiveness of sins, sharing their hope of Eternal life, and sharing their **Common Relationship** with Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, and with their Father in Heaven.

As Christians we have both the **responsibility and the privilege** of sharing in **Christ’s Fellowship**...

**ALL THAT WE HAVE AND ARE** with one another, and **ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.**
Let me try to suggest **three simple aspects** of what this might mean for us today;

Three well known (but often neglected) elements of *Genuine Christian Fellowship*.

- **CARING**
- **SHARING**
- **BEARING**
One in Heart and Mind

**CARING:** As Jesus has commanded His Disciples in *Jn. 13:34–35:*

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My Disciples, if you have love for one another.”
CARING: As Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 12:25-26:

...There are to be no divisions in the body, but each member should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it....
One in Heart and Mind

- **CARING**: Again– learning to care for other people is *not* always easy.

- In the Peanuts Cartoon, I think it was **Linus** who says;
CARING: But even when it is difficult, God calls us to show His kindness and His love to each other in the church.

You don’t have to like me to love me in Christ!

Love as God defines it isn’t natural affection, but super-naturally motivated care. It’s a fruit of the Spirit of Christ. (Gal. 5:22)
One in Heart and Mind

- So many people today are lost and alone in the world. All they need is a bit of care... They are like *Eleanor Rigby* in the famous Beatles song:

  - “All the lonely people,
    Where do they all come from?
    All the lonely people,
    Where do they all **belong**?”

- **GOD’S ANSWER** = **IN HIS BODY**.
And He calls on **ALL of us Christians** to care for “**all the lonely people**” and to offer them that rarest of commodities today, **genuine human acceptance**—with the ultimate goal of introducing them to the infinitely greater **Divine Fellowship of the Savior**.

There are so many people **struggling with sin**. Even among us, there are many for whom the **practice of habitual sin is a daily battle**.
One in Heart and Mind

Hebrews 10:24–25 –
“Let us consider how we may ‘spur one another on’ toward love and good deeds. 25 [And] let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day [of Judgment] approaching.”
One in Heart and Mind

- Living the *Christian* life is a *marathon, not a sprint*. Actually, it’s more like a *relay*.

- It’s a team cooperating together, ‘*Spurring each other on*.’

- So we *need* to meet together often, and not just on Sundays – *For the expressed purpose of encouraging one another*. 
One in Heart and Mind

- Indeed, we should take *every opportunity* to *encourage one another* in our Christian faith and our Christian walk...

- Eph. 4:1–3 –“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
One in Heart and Mind

- So # 1 – *Fellowship meant much more than just seeing each other at church.* *Fellowship in the early church meant, CARING FOR OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS.*

- And # 2 – *It also meant – SHARING EVERYTHING TOGETHER.*

  ✓ CARING
  ✓ SHARING
  ✓ BEARING
One in Heart and Mind

- **SHARING** – Acts 2:44 – “All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”

- One of the *great privileges* of being a *church* is the privilege of *sharing our blessings*.

- *My Bible teaches me that I was blessed to bless others.*
One in Heart and Mind

- **SHARING – 2 Cor. 9:6–15**  
  Paul describes God’s *immeasurable blessings* and how he *blesses us to bless others*—he begins by saying:

- 6* Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7* Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver...
And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, “He scattered abroad, He gave to the poor, His righteousness endures forever.”

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.
One in Heart and Mind

- Notice please:
  - God’s blessings to us were never meant to end with us.
  - His desire is that they be SHARED with others (through us).
One in Heart and Mind

- The Lord has graciously supplied us with our incomes so that we can provide for the needs of others with little or no income.
- More than that—He wants us to use “our” blessings to achieve His Purposes...

(See Eph. 4:28b)
One in Heart and Mind

12 For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the Saints, but is also overflowing through many thanks-givings to God. 13 Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the Gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, 14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!
One in Heart and Mind

- Essentially, God’s generosity with us, enables us to Glorify Him by being generous with others, who in turn come to see God and Glorify Him.

- It essentially comes full circle.
- Shared blessings produce glory to God.
- But hoarded blessings cannot achieve God’s purposes.
One in Heart and Mind

- We can be either the **Red Sea** or the **Dead Sea**. The **Red Sea** allows water to flow through it to **bless others**.

- The **Dead Sea** greedily receives its water, **never to release it again**.

- **Using our blessings** to bless others **glorifies God**. Don’t let His generous provisions end with you. **Pass them on** and discover the joy of a never-ending cycle of blessings.
One in Heart and Mind

- # 1 – Caring for our Brethren is essential to Faithful Fellowship.
- # 2 – Sharing together is equally essential in true Christian Fellowship.

And

- #3 – Genuine Fellowship means – BEARING ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS

✓ CARING
✓ SHARING
✓ BEARING
One in Heart and Mind

- **BEARING** – Galatians 6:2, Paul wrote – “Bear each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the Law of Christ.”

- The word for "burdens" is baros. It means "heaviness, weight, burden, trouble."

Then there less obvious but, still trying, burdens of life. The internal issues of...


And all of us deal with heartache and pain at one time or another.
One in Heart and Mind

- Maybe, if we could just practice “bearing one another’s burdens” in the smaller things, perhaps we would do better when the really big problems come along.

- It should go without saying that “bearing burdens” is not just the Elder’s job or the new minister’s. Every Christian is called to share in this task of bearing each other’s burdens.
One in Heart and Mind

- You say you’re strong– you don’t have any burdens to share. **GREAT**!
- You can be of great help here:
- As *Romans 15:1* says that – “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.”
One in Heart and Mind

- Right now, there are some folks you know who could use your support and care. And that’s what True Fellowship is all about.
- I can’t remember who said these words, but they’re true...

“No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”
One in Heart and Mind

- AND DON’T FORGET— **CARING** for each other, **SHARING** everything together, and **BEARING** one another’s burdens, **opens the door for real Spiritual Conversation, and real Spiritual Fellowship.**
One in Heart and Mind

“BLEST BE THE TIE that binds our hearts in Christian love;

The Fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above...

We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,

And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear...”
One in Heart and Mind

- **Caring** for others,
- **Sharing** with others *(and)*
- **Bearing** with others:
  is what was meant by being of
  “One in heart and One mind.” *(Acts 4:32)*

- Just one more word before I end…
One in Heart and Mind

- The key word here is “ALL.”
- “ALL” of those first Christians shared in their common life.
- It was unanimous.
One in Heart and Mind

- Lassen Street has unanimously cared, shared and beared with me and with my wife Naomi, and we Thank You from the bottom of our hearts for your many, many blessings.
- We will not forget you.
One in Heart and Mind

- Your Fellowship has been our greatest blessing and we love you for it.
One in Heart and Mind

✓ Caring for each other,
✓ Sharing our lives together,
✓ Bearing one another’s burdens is what being God’s Fellow-Ship-Mates really means.
Captain James Lawrence commanded the USS Chesapeake. On June 1, 1813, Lawrence's ship found herself trapped in Boston Harbor by the blockading Royal Navy frigate HMS Shannon.
Captain Lawrence was mortally wounded by small arms fire. But just before his death his order to his fellow officers was, "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!"
For the faithful, *Jesus Christ is the Captain of our hearts.* His death is our Life. His victory is our victory. And because of His actions at Calvary, His final orders are our present orders:

“*DON’T GIVE UP YOUR FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST.*”
One in Heart and Mind

We love You.
God Bless You.

*amen*