

GOD'S FELLOWSHIP LAW (Inclusion & Exclusion)

God wants "unity" among His people, and condemns division. He does not want unity at any cost, and does not condemn all division. He has a LAW of Inclusion & Exclusion, that we want to consider at this time.

I. 1st, God's law of Inclusion.

- A. The law stated: We are in fellowship with those who have done what the NT says to do, because we are God's children. Js.3:3-5; Gal.3:26f
 - 1. We are then in fellowship with God and one another. 1Jn.1:3,7
 - 2. Before obedience one is a child of the devil, and afterward he becomes
 - 3. The law illustrated: Those IN the ark when the flood came were protected by God, and those outside the ark were not. So it is with the CHURCH.....
- B. An important question to consider simply stated:
 - 1. Can we be faithful to God and not honor His law of Inclusion & Exclusion?
 - 2. Christian fellowship cannot be extended to them: (1) Who are not yet yet Christians, (2) To those not in the kingdom, (3) Those not in the church, (4) Those not in the family of God, and still in the family of Satan. Cf 1 Sam. 15:22-23
 - 3. WARNING: Some would have us reject the distinction between children of God and children of the devil, and between the true church and denominations (Mt.15:13; Ro.16:17; 2Jn.9-11) based on the idea of "unity in diversity). Cf Ep.5:11

II. 2nd, God's law of Exclusion.

- A. Some preliminary considerations.
 - 1. God's love is universal, and He wants tll to be saved. Jn.3:16; 2Pe.3:9
 - 2. We should love all men and desire their salvation. Mk.16:15f; Mt.5:45; Gal.6:10
 - 3. Unity is the "ideal" state, brought about by obedience. 1Co.12:19f; Ep. 4:4-6; 1Jn.1:7
 - 4. God condemns "unity" brought about by error. Ro.16:17f; Ep.5:11; 1Co.1:10-13
 - 5. Some "unity" is condemned. Rev.2:15,16,20
 - 6. There is a distinction between general and specific authority. Cf Mk.16:16
 - 7. We must obey only divine authority. Mt.21:23-27
 - 8. Local churches can exercise human judgment in carrying out their obligations, and in indifferent matters.
- B. Passages for God's law of exclusion.
 - 1. Matt. 18:15-17
 - 2. 1 Cor. 5:2-13
 - 3. 2 John 9-11
- C. Statement of God's Law of Exclusion.
 - 1. Some thoughts, preceding the precise statement, in every society, has the right and obligation, to protect itself against efforts to destroy it.
 - a. Planning and carrying out its mission.
 - b. Exhorting, reproving & rebuking its own failing efforts.
 - c. Excluding all not a part of its effort.

- d. Recognizing varying stages of development and accomplishing of it's missions.
 - e. Recognizing that church discipline is primarily positive & is to be executed by love, FOR the offenders and for the church.
2. An expanded statement of God's law of Exclusion.
- a. Fellowship should be extended TO all obedient to the gospel. Ro.. 6:17f; 1Jn.1:7
 - b. Fellowship is **not** to be extended to those who do NOT obey the gospel, OR to those who cease to be part of the fellowship, and do not walk in the light (1Jn.1:7), or who are walking in darkness (Ep.5:11), or do not abide in Christ's doctrine (2 Jn.9-11).
 - c. When belief and practices of 1 or more IN the fellowship changes (endangering his soul and the souls of others), then corrective discipline needs to take place.