

Let's take a look at Luke 5.

¹One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, ²he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch people." ¹¹So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

The word translated partners (vs 7 and 10) are actually different words in Greek (μετόχοις – metochois, κοιωνοὶ - koinonoi)

QUESTIONS

- What would be essential elements for a fishing partnership that Peter, James and John had?
- How would you begin to define a *koinonia* partnership?
- What would be involved?

Next Study: Exploring four elements of *koinonia* partnership.

Exploring Koinonia

Study One

Partnership in Action

Imagine that a word is like a bucket – we get to see the outside form but the contents remain fluid and harder to define. In exploring the concept of *koinonia* we are trying to fill a foreign bucket (word) with meaning. We can start by developing our own sense of what the word might mean in some biblical examples.



When the early disciples gathered they shared in *koinonia* (ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ) – read the context of the word in the reading from Acts and write down some ideas for translating the word.

Acts 2 ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to **koinonia**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as they had need.

In the following text, the word *koinoneo* is a verb (a doing word). Again, consider the context and write down some ideas of how to translate the word.

Romans 12 ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. ¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³**Koinoneo** God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

The next verse may have you thinking of another way to translate the word.

2 Corinthians 6 ¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what **koinonia** can light have with darkness?

In Romans we find another context. There are two references here, how could they be translated as you read the context?

Romans 15 ²⁵Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. ²⁶For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make **koinonia** for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. ²⁷They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have **koinoneo** in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

The words of 1 Corinthians 10 are used in the institution of the Lord's Supper – they may well be very familiar. But try to translate koinonia in the context that exists only in this verse.



1 Corinthians 10 ¹⁶Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks **koinonia** in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break **koinonia** in the body of Christ?

One final context for koinonia. What do you make of it in this situation?

Galatians 2 ⁸For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of **koinonia** when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. ¹⁰All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

DISCUSS

- How might you describe **koinonia** from the context of these verses?
- How adequate are 'partnership', 'communion', 'fellowship', and 'sharing' as synonyms for **koinonia**?

We can also explore different translations of the same verse. Look at 2 Corinthians 13:14 in various versions and languages.

η χαρις του κυριου ιησου [χριστου] και η αγαπη του θεου και η **κοινωνια** του αγιου πνευματος μετα παντων υμων (*Westcott-Hort New Testament*)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and **the communion** of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. (*King James Version*)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and **the fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (*New International Version*)

The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the **intimate friendship** of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you. (*The Message*)

Kia tau ki a koutou katoa te atawhai o te Ariki, o Ihu Karaiti, me te aroha o te Atua, me **te whiwhinga tahitanga** ki te Wairua Tapu. (*Maori*)

gratia Domini nostri Iesu Christi et caritas Dei et **communicatio** Sancti Spiritus cum omnibus vobis (*Latin*)

Ia ia te outou uma lava le alofa tunoa o le Alii o Iesu Keriso, ma le alofa o le Atua, atoa ma **le mafuta faatasi** ma le Agaga Paia. (*Samoa*)

Ko e kelesi 'a e 'Eiki ko Sisu Kalaisi, mo e 'ofa 'a e 'Otua, **mo e feohi 'a** e Laumalie Ma'oni'oni, 'ofa ke 'iate kimoutolu kotoa pe ia. (*Tongan*)

Have a look also at Philemon 1:6 in any versions that are available. What differences are there?

DISCUSS

- How comfortable would you be if the familiar words of the Grace were changed?
- What word could you replace "fellowship" with? Why?