

SESSION 1 – WEEK OF 17 JAN 2021

TRUE FELLOWSHIP: HAVE YOU TRULY SEEN AND HEARD?

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 1:1-4

Theme:

The question of true fellowship and that fellowship flowing from truly having seen and heard the message.

Key Verse:

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” (1John 1:3)

Read 1 John 1:1-4

Core Questions for Discussion

(If your group meets fortnightly, combine Core Questions of two sessions and choose one Further Question from either session.)

1. 1 John 1:1-4 is John’s prologue to his first epistle. In it he presents the basis for fellowship with God the Father, God the Son, the apostles and other Christians.
At vv.1-2, he proclaims a message. Why does John, rather unusually, describe the message as not just *heard*, but also *seen* and *touched*? What is the content of this message?

Who wrote 1 John?

It is a commonly held belief that 1 John was written by the Apostle John and that he also wrote the Gospel according to John and the book of Revelation. For a discussion specifically on the authorship of 1 John please see “Who wrote 1, 2, & 3 John?” <<https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/who-wrote-1-2-3-john>>

John was addressing issues posed by Christians who had been influenced by Gnostic/Docetic teachings. Christians who had become too subjective in their understanding of their faith; too mystical in their approach to God; too “spiritual” to the extent of neglecting real life challenges. Audience was Jewish Christians around Ephesus who had encountered a form of false gospel. Aim was to emphasise fellowship with God and fellowship with one another (v.3) that our joy may be complete (v.4).

2. What is the reason for the proclamation of John's message (vv.3-4)?

3. John suggests that his joy, and the joy of the believers with him, remains only a partial joy, until the epistle's recipients come into fellowship with them. Does this description surprise you (v.4)?

4. In light of John's prologue, what is the foundation of our fellowship as Christians? Why is this important? How would you respond to the title of this week's sermon: Have you truly seen and heard?

Further Questions for Discussion

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

5. *If you have time ...*
What comes to mind when you think of fellowship and what are some of the barriers you have experienced in deepening your fellowship with:-
 - a. God?

 - b. Other Christians?

Suggestions for Prayer

6. We could pray for:
 - a. The fellowship within our small group, for the Holy Spirit to guide us into deeper relationship with God and with each other. Let us pray that we may all encounter the living Person of Jesus Christ, who is more than a concept, a philosophy, or a set of values.

 - b. Other believers in our church many of whom are not in small groups. At a time when we are not congregating on-site in BRMC, let us pray for those who may be without community. Let us pray for openness in our current small groups to welcome those who are searching for a community in small group. Ask God to show you a person whom you could invite to your small group in 2021.