

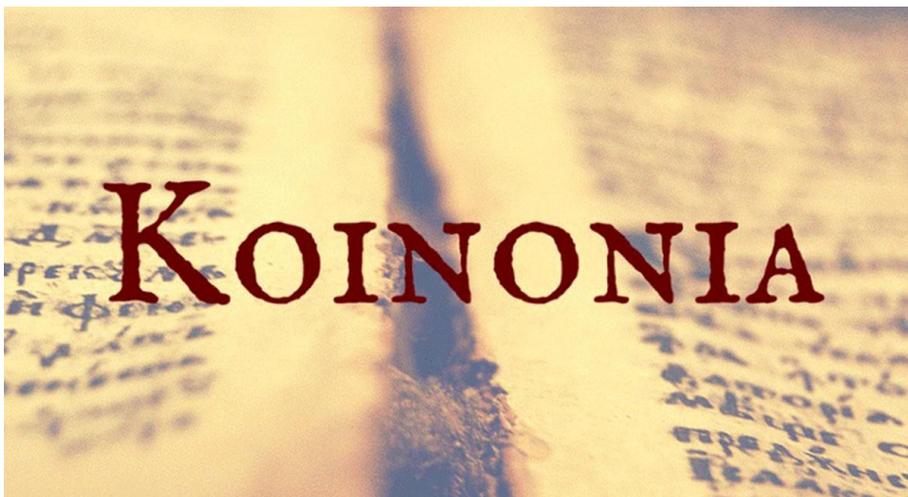
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Christians can work to restore the value and meaning of “Fellowship”

There is, in the Bible, and in real language, a distinction between friendship and fellowship. That distinction is very clear in Scripture and yet it is modern politically-correct use of the words that are destroying that difference.

Christians can show the value and the importance of the difference and help people a lot.

A good friend died last week and she lived with her sister. It has been a very long-standing wrong in the UK that where two sisters lived together that, firstly the other sister has no visiting rights in hospital in the UK, and then you can have the absurd situation where, if the house or apartment is not owned jointly, that if the owner dies then the surviving sister can face eviction. Of course this scenario is not limited to sisters at all, its just that most of us know of a couple of elderly sisters who have always lived together, but it could just as easily be two elderly bothers, or siblings or any other couple.



The New Testament of the Bible is written in the ancient greek language of the time. That language is called “koine greek”.

The starting problem here is that the Bible has always had different words for friendship, fellowship and for marriage.

In modern politically correct language the words “friendship” and “fellowship” have come to have effectively the same meaning and yet they are really quite different, and have always been different.

Using english letters in place of the koine greek letters we can trans-literate the word in the Bible to be “Koinonia”.

In koine-greek the word is:

In english we can transliterate that as “Koinonia” (pronounced “koi-know-knee-a”) to make it easier for us.



The koine greek of the Bible has entirely different words for “marriage” and for “friendship”, “Gamos” and “Philia”. We see a lot of derivatives of philia in english words that describe how we simply like something.

For example the koine-greek word for marriage (or equally when the text is about a wedding) is “Gamos” when using english letters, or as shown here in original koine-greek:

γάμος

So when Jesus Christ tells us about marriage in the gospels he is telling us about Gamos.

Similarly, the koine-greek word for friendship is “philia” (the exact opposite of which is “phobia”). Philia is shown in the koine-greek form of the word here:

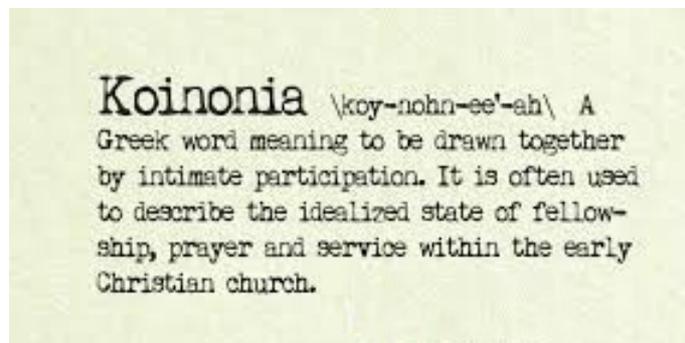
φιλία

There are a mere 8000 words in koine greek and so there is no such thing as spare words that have the same meanings. Hence Koinonia, Philia and Gamos are all different words, precisely because they have clearly different meanings.

There is an intimacy in the relationship between people that is in the word koinonia that does not exist in the word friendship.

To be friends you could simply like each other. However, to be in koinonia there is a much more intimate relationship that is about permanent togetherness.

This is “intimate participation” in each other’s lives.



The word “Friendship” simply does not include any need for intimacy at all. Intimacy is different because it does not always mean that you like what you know intimately, or that you agree with it but, instead, you know all about it precisely because of the intimacy in the relationship.

It is this “intimate participation in each other’s lives” that gets to the heart of the relationship example with which I started. The example of the two sisters living their lives together. It is this type of “intimate participation in each other’s lives” that we can thank God for that exists in our world. It is to be valued. It is here that Christians can help to right the kind of wrongs that exist in our secular society an example of which is shown at the beginning of this article. We should require modernists to be more precise with the words that they choose to use.

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