

Acts 2:42

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Preacher: Donald Macleod

[0 : 00] We shall turn now to the Acts of the Apostles and the second chapter, reading at verse 42.

Acts chapter 2 and verse 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Now this chapter takes us back to the very origins of the Christian Church. And we find that the Church as it then was, was a thoroughly charismatic community.

And in fact, we find it laid down that the Church of all ages is to be a charismatic community. It has been called into being in this chapter by preaching on the part of a man filled with the Spirit of God. And those who responded to that preaching by faith, received for themselves the same fullness of that Spirit.

[1 : 45] If they turned to God in Christ, then this very same gift of Pentecost came in all its glorious fullness upon themselves.

And so what we have is a body which is a result of charismatic preaching, and a body made up of charismatic people.

And if we bear that in mind, it's well to ask ourselves, what kind of community did that kind of preaching create?

And what kind of people were they? Those people who were so blessed and so filled with the Spirit of God.

And if we do ask, and ask closely, what kind of church it was, then the answer is given to us very plainly in the words of our text.

[2 : 57] They were characterized by four great features. We find, first of all, that they adhered steadfastly to the apostolic doctrine.

In actual fact, the picture may be rather different, but they continued to wait hungrily and expectantly upon the apostles' teaching.

Day by day in the temple, the apostles engaged in this great ministry of instructing those young converts.

And those converts showed their spirituality. They showed the effect of God's Spirit in their own lives.

They showed their own charismatic experience. By waiting eagerly and avidly upon the teaching ministry of the apostles.

[4 : 10] There was no possibility that they should be so spiritual and so active that they had no time for teaching. On the contrary, the specific and direct consequence of this tremendous experience is that they are desperate to be taught.

And they come, therefore, where they can get sound teaching. They come for the doctrine. They come, if I may say it quite unashamedly, they come for the theology.

They had had what was an undoubted charismatic experience. They had sat under charismatic preaching.

They had been baptized in the charisma of the Spirit of God. And the direct consequences, first and foremost, that they wait humbly, attentively, and avidly upon the teaching of the apostles.

We find also that they are characterized by their constant participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. they were coming to the breaking of bread.

[5 : 39] It was another sign of the effect of the charismatic experience upon themselves and upon their lives. We find, thirdly, that they showed the same commitment to the prayers.

Now, it isn't at all that they engaged in private and personal devotion. I do not doubt but they did so. But the point of this narrative is that just as they waited upon the public teaching ministry and just as they came to the public sacrament of the Lord's Supper, so they came to the place of public prayer.

They came to the public teaching, they came to the public sacrament, and they came to the public prayer. It all seems so mundane.

It seems so routine. And yet how glorious it is that those people who were filled so splendidly with all the blessings of the new covenant expressed their new commitment and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ in these great ways.

The desperation for teaching, the appreciation of the Lord's Supper, and the humble participation in the public gatherings for prayer.

[7 : 24] As you have seen, I have omitted one of the details, that is the emphasis on fellowship. They continued to wait upon the apostolic teaching, and they continued steadfastly in the fellowship.

It is not specifically the apostolic fellowship, it is fellowship in the general sense. And I want for a moment tonight to isolate this one feature of the life of the early church.

It is something that we ourselves speak about a great deal. Something we complain very much is lacking in our own organization, possibly, as a Christian church.

But what do we mean by it? And what does the New Testament mean by this concept of fellowship? I think that the best entry into this whole subject is to remind ourselves of the basic meaning of this word.

Its basic meaning is quite simply sharing or having something in common. The Greek word is the word *koinonia*, not a difficult sound to take away with us.

[9 : 02] They continued in the apostles *koinonia*. They continued in the fellowship. They continued in the sharing. They continued to have certain things common.

We find, for example, that the language in which the New Testament is written is called the vulgar Greek. That is, it is the *koine* Greek.

It is the common Greek. It wasn't the Greek of classical culture. It was the Greek of the common man.

We find again that when the Lord sends Peter to Cornelius, he gives the apostle a vision. And in that vision, Peter sees a whole array of foods, some common and unclean.

And the apostle protests that he has never eaten anything which is common or unclean. it is the same word, common *koine*.

[10 : 15] The common language was the vulgar language. The common food was the vulgar food.

It was the food everybody shared. The language everybody shared. My problem is that so often to us, fellowship is a mystical experience.

We mean by fellowship with God that we have had some experience in which our hearts were suffused with some kind of emotional warmth.

We mean possibly some mystical communication from God, some word of revelational guidance.

We mean by fellowship among ourselves that we had a certain mystical dimension possibly to our own social togetherness.

Or maybe fellowship simply means our participating in certain shared actions. It may be a church outing. It may be even a football match, but it's said to be fellowship because we are doing it together.

[11 : 39] And I think that in the face of all that confusion, we want to come back to this great idea that in the New Testament, fellowship is having certain things in common.

It is not a mystical experience. It is not an emotional experience, it is an objective situation where we are sharing in certain great realities.

I want tonight to suggest to you that there are three great levels in the New Testament on which this whole idea of fellowship operates.

there is the level, first of all, of the fellowship of God the Son with God the Father.

There is the fellowship, secondly, of the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is the fellowship, thirdly, of one believer with another believer.

[12 : 53] Now you see at once the glory and the grandeur of the New Testament's perspective, that this whole idea of fellowship has to be seen from those three points of view.

Let's go through them for a moment. First of all, the fellowship of God the Son with God the Father. I come back again to my idea of *koinonia*, the whole idea of sharing. And I'm asking, what is it that God the Son and God the Father share?

What is it that they have in common? What is it that they equally participate in? Well, they share, for example, the being of the Godhead.

they share deity. The divine nature, the divine fullness, the divine glory, the divine splendor, the divine majesty, are common to God the Father and to God the Son.

[14 : 11] They are shared. There is fellowship in the very being of God. They share the divine substance.

Every single divine attribute is common to God the Father and God the Son. Every divine function is common to God the Father and God the Son.

Every divine prerogative or right is common to God the Father and God the Son. There is fellowship between the two persons at this most profound level of their sharing equally in the divine nature.

Again, they share the same throne. I have, I suppose, suggested this often before, that in the Godhead, in the sovereignty of God, we do not have two thrones or three thrones.

We have one throne. We have one great sovereignty, one great government, one great divine administration.

[15 : 31] And the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit share that throne equally. the Lamb is in the midst of the throne.

Christ at the very heart of the sovereignty of God. That means that they have fellowship in the whole business of creating this universe, preserving it, and governing it.

And they have fellowship equally in the great work of judging it. They share the same throne. They participate equally in the whole business of the divine administration.

Equally, they share the people of God. Christ refers to the church as that which thou hast given me. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me. almost a divine donation within the Godhead itself so that God the Father and God the Son share equally in the love, adoration, and redemption of God's own people.

[17 : 19] Let me take you even further for a moment into that. into the great reality of eternal election.

And remind you that at that very level of election where God's people are loved and God's people are chosen, that at that ultimate level there is the fellowship between God the Father and God the Son.

So that Christ shares with the Father in that great moment, that great eternal moment of divine loving and of divine electing.

It cannot be that they are in any way chosen by the Father without also being chosen by the Son himself.

there is fellowship at the point of predestination. It is an act of fellowship of the Father with the Son because the same love is in the heart of each.

[18 : 38] Fellowship in affection, fellowship in commitment to his own people. and how often one sees that in the New Testament where sometimes the emphasis falls upon the Father's love, God so loved that he gave.

And other times it falls on the Son's love, Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. so they share in the divine being, they share the divine throne, they share the people of God.

And I will add to it one thing more, that there is a sharing of knowledge. What the Father knows, the Son knows.

I'm saying it because there is a text in the New Testament in Matthew chapter 11, where the Lord himself says in prayer to God the Father, that the Father has given all things to the Son.

And he says it in that great context where he has also said that those things are hidden from the wise and prudent, but are made known to the cruel and to the humble.

[20 : 10] He's speaking about revelation, about knowledge. And it's then that he says that all things are given by the Father to the Son.

That is, the Father has given to the Son as mediator all the knowledge that is necessary for the Church's salvation.

salvation. And I'm not going into that, I just want to remind you that all we know about God is what God himself decides to tell us.

And that the way that God has chosen to take in telling us is that he has whispered in the ear of his Son, our mediator.

All that we need to know and that Christ has come out of the presence of God with that great message and that great revelation God has shared with him his own self- understanding.
[21 : 25] Now I have deliberately taken this idea of fellowship right back into the depths of the Trinity.

What I'm saying to you is that fellowship begins in the fact of the plurality of God.
The fact that in God, to use strictly New Testament terms, we have God with God.
The word was with God and the word was with God. Now you grasp that. Grasp that plurality.
Grasp that witness. And then grasp that God has made man in his own image. Grasp that we are made in the image of a God in whom there is witness.
[22 : 34] We bear the image of a God in whom there is fellowship. Fellowship is part of his essence. Fellowship is part of his nature.

That means that when God makes man in his own image, then in man too there is witness. In man too there is fellowship.

In man too there is sharing. And to a terrible degree that witness is perverted in the fall.
The plurality, the pluralness does not cease. But that pluralness which had been a pluralness of witness becomes a pluralness of antagonism, of strife, and of hostility.
the man is ashamed in the presence of the woman. The man blames the woman. In a very brief space of time, Cain takes his brother and he slays him.

[23 : 59] We have the pluralness but we have lost the witness. but when God recreates man, when God redeems him, God redeems him along those great lines of the image, those great lines of the sharing, those great lines of the trinity itself.

And God in the very act of saving gathers us into the community that is the Christian church. But always, if I may be so bold as to say so, the fellowship in God is the model for the fellowship of the church.

The trinity itself is the model for the fellowship in the church. the witness and the sharing that we have are themselves extensions and images of the witness in God and of the sharing that we find in the very heart of the Godhead itself.

In that Godhead, the Son shares in the Father's being, in the Father's sovereignty, in the Father's people, in the Father's knowledge.

And it is that intra-trinitarian fellowship that is the foundation and the model for all the fellowship that we experience in redemption.

[25 : 51] Let me turn at once to the second level of fellowship and that is the fellowship between the believer and Jesus Christ. Now I stay again with this narrow focus that fellowship is sharing, fellowship is having in common.

And I'm not asking at all now, what moments of mystical encounter does the believer small have with the soul of his Lord?

But I am asking, what does the believer have in common with Christ? What do Christ and believers share?

Let me go through it. We share in the status of Christ. Christ is the justified one.

Christ is the Son of God. Christ is righteous. Having borne our sin, having endured the anathema, he is righteous.

[27 : 02] What do we share? We share his righteousness. We are God's righteousness in him. Have we ever suspected that fellowship means that Christ's righteousness is ours, that we share it with him?

That fellowship is our participation with him in the glory of divine sonship? We have adoption in the beloved.

We have the exact relation to God that Jesus Christ has. We are as righteous as Christ. We are as guiltless as Christ.

We are as free from condemnation as Christ. We are as welcome in heaven as Christ. We have the same legal rights as Christ, the same entitlements as Christ.

We have the status of Christ Christ. In all the fullness of its glory, we have that in common.

Furthermore, we have the spirit of Christ in common.

[28 : 22] God gave him the spirit without measure, and we are members of the body of Christ. And as we are members of that body, we share totally in the spirit of Jesus.

Now you take that glorious comparison in all its literal suggestiveness, the body and the spirit, the spirit, the breath.

Every single member of the physical body benefits from the breath. Every cell, every tiniest element of tissue is sustained by the breath.

In one spirit, we were all baptized into one body, and we were all made to drink. In one spirit, and we were all irrigated.

The Holy Spirit is the breath that pervades the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the fluid that irrigates every single cell in that bottle.

[29 : 52] We cannot be in the body of Christ without sharing in the spirit of Christ. Our spirit without mission. The spirit in all his ministries, the spirit in all his power.

Now it may be tonight that we feel dead cold, that we feel dead bored, that we feel no emotional impact whatsoever in any detail of the service.

perhaps we are too tired to benefit intellectually, too jaded to benefit from it psychologically. That does not affect the reality for the child of God that he shares in his great moments and he shares in his low moments.

He shares in the status of Christ and he shares in the spirit of Christ. my feelings may ebb and flow, my emotions may be up and down, my life may know moments of terrible inconsistency and my soul move through periods of darkness and modernness, but that does not affect my fellowship any more than I move in a doubt of justification, any more than I move in a doubt of adoption.

I do no more move in a doubt of fellowship with Christ because it is not subjective, it is a great objective reality.

[31 : 37] It is to share in the standing of Jesus and it is to share in the spirit of Jesus. it is also to share in the sufferings of Jesus that I might know him, says Paul in Philippians 3, that I might know him in the power of his resurrection certainly, but also in the fellowship of his sufferings.

and how rich the whole concept of koinonia of having in common becomes at that great point where we in Christ suffer sharingly suffer together.

Now consider what that means for him. he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. In all the afflictions he is afflicted and he can say to Saul the persecutor Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Because Christ himself was feeling that persecution. He was the object of that persecution. he was sharing in the sufferings of his own church. But then equally we ourselves are sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

[33 : 21] In other words the reproach cast at Christ, the opprobrium directed at Christ, the scorn he anathema seeked upon the Son of God.

we have to share in them. We have to take up our crosses daily and follow Christ. Now it may be that sometimes there are faces of Christianity and forms of it which the world which the world can never love Christ.

And it cannot love anything that is identifiable with Christ. And I cannot but reflect that often we have as Christians a triumphalist expectation that totally contradicts this terrible picture given to us in the New Testament for by we are called upon to share in the sufferings of the Savior.

we have no right to expect the worst of probation or the worst prodded or the worst applause.

We are going to be crucified with Christ. We are going to undergo the same vilification and face the same misunderstanding and face the same ultimate rejection.

[35 : 12] Let me take it on to a deeper level still. Christ was not only the object of the world's enmity he was also the object of Satan's enmity.

And we are going to face collectively and individually that same reality. The devil is going to have a goal at every single one of us.

He is going to try to destroy us. He is going to make Christianity and discipleship as hard for us as he possibly can. And I put it to you he is not going to wait at all until we are mature Christians.

Rabbi Duncan reminds us very effectively of the fallacy in the proverb that God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

There was I gather such a problem. And as Rabbi Duncan said it is not true in nature and it's not true in grace.

[36 : 23] the winds that blow in January they are not mitigated to accommodate the needs of the newborn lamb.

You find with Jesus Christ no sooner is he baptized than he is subjected to the most awful temptations and it may be with us that we are no sooner converted than we are faced with the most terrible challenge to our own Christianity.

The temple is going to get at us as soon as he possibly can. And that is part of the fellowship of the Lord's sufferings.

It would do us good sometimes to see our temptations in the context of fellowship with our suffering savior. Because of the pain they involve where they are faced up to Christianly.

Not if they are instantly yielded to but if they are resisted then there is the pain and there is the suffering of which Getsammery is the great symbol when Christ strives stands unto blood striving against sin.

[37 : 57] Now I said you share in the status of Christ and I said you share in the spirit of Christ but I am saying too you share in the sufferings of Christ you share in the world's hostility to him and you share in Satan's antagonism too.

And I will take you one road one stage further down that road and I will remind you of this that Christ learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

There are the words the curriculum by which God educated his son was a curriculum of suffering. He learned sonship he learned obedience in the things that he suffered. Now I can't tonight and perhaps can't at any time define the content of that with any kind of exhaustedness.

there is a great deal in our lives which we can understand only from that point of view that this is God's curriculum the curriculum of suffering.

[39 : 25] I do not want to suggest that in our lives there is nothing but suffering or to suggest even that in our lives suffering predominates.

I have been kept in many ways from many of life's tragedies. But the reality is still there.

the reality of God's own revelational word, his own projection. We are to share with Christ the discipline that Christ underwent.

He learned sonship in the things that he suffered and the lessons that you and I cannot hope to learn in any other way.

we saw we share in the Lord's status and we share in the Lord's spirit and we share in the Lord's sufferings. And sometimes we should say to ourselves when we are being attacked by the world and attacked by the devil and when we are going through inexplicable providences and we're saying to ourselves I've even lost my fellowship with the Lord.

[40 : 53] We should bring ourselves up with that joke and remind ourselves that possibly in these very things there is the fellowship of the Lord.

We are walking the road that he walked and sharing the experiences that he had to endure. But I would have to add one thing more to do.

And that is this. We share in the inheritance of Christ. We share in his status and in his spirit and in his sufferings and we share in his inheritance.

What a great word that is where the apostle tells us we are heirs of God and we are joint heirs with Christ. Christ. I said earlier on that God the Father and God the Son have the same throne.

And I am saying now what is even more astonishing that Jesus Christ and you have the same inheritance. God's will is made out in your joint favor and it is made out equally in your joint favor.

[42 : 12] The New Testament does not discriminate between the inheritance of Christ and the inheritance of the humblest believer because we might ask what is the inheritance of Jesus Christ the only begotten Son and the answer is God is his inheritance.

and we would say that's fitting because he's God's son. But what is our inheritance? God is our inheritance.

We are heirs of God and we are joined heirs with Christ. That means that just as he conquered so we shall be more than conquerors we shall be hyper conquerors.

Just as he was highly exalted hyper exalted so we shall be hyper exalted just as he sits in the midst of the throne so we shall find our eternal pasture at the fountain of those living waters which flow out of the midst of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are joined heirs with Jesus Christ.

[43 : 51] What do Jesus Christ and we have in common? We have the same status, we have the same spirit, we have the same suffering, we have the same inheritance or the same legacy.

And then briefly the third aspect of fellowship and that is the fellowship that believers have with one another.

And here again it's so important to grasp this whole idea of the sharing. The fellowship means that we have certain things in common that we share certain things.

Now let me go through it very very quickly. First of all we share the same family, we belong to the same family and it makes no difference what denomination we belong to.

It makes even less difference what stream within a denomination we belong to. The only thing that matters is faith in Christ and I do beg you whatever loyalty you are cultivating towards your own distinctive testimony let it never never drive out of your mind the picture of a church and a family which are wider than any single branch of the church of Christ.

[45 : 31] It seems to me so absurd in fact it seems to me so pathetic at the foot of the cross of Calvary in the face of this whole idea of koinonia that we are sometimes trying to find some great free church distinctive which will bind us together in some common bond.

And I'm trying to say that what must hold us together are the great distinctive doctrines of the Christian faith.

If we have a distinctive let it be Catholicity let it be orthodoxy let it be the truth of God I am trembling because I see and I hear more and more people want to take me back and say we are losing our people let us begin to emphasize purity of worship because otherwise we'll lose our people unless you make them distinctive and I'm saying if the free church exists only for purity of worship I shall not stay in the free church but if the free church exists to bear testimony to central gospel realities including the catholicity of the body of Christ then I shall stay.

We are one great family and let us heed, let us love, let us thrill to it. We may abuse one another. We may criticize and condemn one another. But one thing I can ever do if a man is my brother in trust by the love of God then my reaction to him can never un-brother.

[47 : 26] It can only heap calls of fire upon my own head. Let us tremble, tremble before we un-church, before we miss call, before we assume the right and the wisdom to decide who belongs to the family of God.

That decision was taken by God long ago in his own eternal love. That is the reality.

It is a glorious reality. But when across the barricades of sectarianism people began to apply epithets to one another, what a solemn thing then becomes to reflect that they are God's children in the very face of God at the foot of that cross upon which God purchased the church by his own blood.

And there they are, brother hurling anathema at brother. I am pleading that the whole idea of the unity of the church, of a worldwide brotherhood, of a centuries wide brotherhood, the idea of absolute New Testament Catholicity, I want it as a free church to stay to.

I want us to realize that we have this mighty reality in common, we belong to the one family. We all have God's name written upon our foreheads.

[49 : 23] Before you apply any nickname to any professing christian, look, look between the eyes and look, is there a name on his forehead and is it God's name that's on his forehead?

And that will keep many of it quarrels in perspective. And then we have in common all material resources.

Now, I must just mention that. None of us has the resources of the worst material things, our own earning capacity, none of it is at all.

you go back into this glorious narrative. They continue in the apostles' fellowship. In verse 44, all that believed were together, and had all things common, and so were possessions and goods, and part them to all men, as every man in need.

God, it is not enough to say there is a transitional communism. It is more than that.

[50 : 38] It is the affirmation on the very threshold of the church's existence that communism, even in material things, is to be an enduring characteristic of our existence.

we are to share the resources that we have. We are to do so on the local level, but brethren, we are to do so also on the international level.

We are to remember constantly the needs of Christians in different circumstances from ourselves.

And we even manage to ask ourselves, are we in a position as a church, even organizationally?

Is the Western church at all in a position organizationally to exercise a real ministry of sharing and of compassion?

We had good fellowship. Far too often, it only means we had a nice meeting. Now I'm all for nice meetings, but nice meetings are not fellowship.

[51 : 53] In fact, I will say that sometimes nice meetings are a violation of fellowship. They can be an obscenity. When there is some urgent need that is not being made, we share as Christians internationally our own material resources.

We share the same name. We share our material resources. What else do we share? We share our burdens. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Christ, I'm not asking you to go and offload your burdens onto other people. I would be tempted if I had time to say that we are in some respects going too far along the American road in that direction. But I am saying that you must be prepared to accept other people's burdens. I don't expect anybody to bear mine.

And I do not say it, I hope, arrogantly. But I still think that we have to be totally open to the burdens of others and totally receptive of the burdens of others.

[53 : 23] We should perhaps become skilled in identifying who is burdened and who has problems of whatever kind. Not to become medicine, not to become deceit bodies, but to ask from God the collective discernment to know who are the people that are burdened and what discreetly and lovingly and humbly and creatively can we do to share the load that that human being may be bearing, bear one and other's burdens, whatever the burden may happen to be.

And I will add to just one more point, and that is this, that we share the responsibility for evangelism. You see how glorious it is in the epistle of Paul to the Philippians, how he thanks them for their fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

They share the gospel. That means at one level that they share the cost of disseminating it. And he tells us that once and again that church at Philippi communicated with him as concerning giving and receiving.

They shared. They sent things which met his temporal needs. That is true.

But that wasn't the real point when he spoke all their fellowship in the gospel. He meant their fellowship in evangelization. They were fellow workers with them.

[55 : 25] They didn't only remember Paul and his evangelism. They didn't only send to meet his needs.

They didn't only pray for him. But they were evangelists with Paul. And his exhortation is at last that they are to stand with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

God will do to God do believe that the church must have ministries which are concerned specifically with disseminating God's gospel evangelistically.

God I do not believe that there is a single Christian who has been relieved personally of his own evangelistic responsibility.

We share it. Indeed if you go into Philippians what I advise you to do tonight and you read that great passage in which the apostle says that he is persuaded of this very thing that he which began this good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

[56 : 53] What he is saying is that all his confidence that these people are saved derives from the monumental fact that they are sharing the burden of evangelism.

in fact I am not at all sure but the good work of which he speaks as having been begun in them by God is itself not the work of conversion but the work of evangelism.

They are sharing it. They are with one mind striving standing together for the faith of the gospel.

So as Christians we share the family name. We share in one another's material resources.

We share one another's burdens and we share the whole responsibility for evangelism. Now tomorrow we shall symbolize that sharing in a marvelously simple symbolism of the Lord's supper.

[58 : 16] Thus we receive the bread and receive the wine from the brothers and sisters in the Lord and pass that bread on and pass that wine on to other brothers and sisters in the Lord in a great circle of giving and receiving.

It has become even more conscious than that we are to continue in the apostles fellowship. Now as I close I want to remind you of some of the details with regard to that communion service.

I am asked to intimate that you receive communion tokens after the benediction for intending communicants and any visitors present to our communicant members of any branch of the visible church will be welcomed to the Lord's table in this congregation and are also invited to wait for a token.

If there are any persons present who would like to come to the Lord's table for the first time and have not yet met with a session they will have the opportunity of doing so after the distribution of tokens.

Now I come back again to this whole problem of fellowship sharing. Therefore every Christian should be at the Lord's table.

[59 : 41] I say that without qualification or expansion. It is the sacrament of fellowship and we should all be there otherwise we violate the fellowship.

That means those in this congregation who are Christians. It also means those not of this congregation who are Christians and may want to share with us in our oneness and express their own oneness with us.

It is for the Lord's people. We shall exercise as the church has done historically we shall exercise proper care to safeguard the Lord's honour with regard to his own table.

But that never means that we keep any of the Lord's people away from it. May God bless you as we shall pray. Amen. Amen.