



Fellowship – fel' o-ship'

1. companionship
2. a union of friends
3. two or more fellows on a ship!

Chart a Course to Successful Fellowships.

Years ago I toured scale replicas of Christopher Columbus' fleet. The Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria safely carried Columbus and his crew across the Atlantic Ocean. Our tour guide shared interesting information about life aboard the ships and the hazards of sea travel. "There was safety," our guide remarked, "in sailing together."

Life's voyage can be hazardous. That's why we need to sail with others. I once heard someone say that Satan is a pirate looking for a vessel without a fleet. We are indeed most vulnerable when we try to navigate through life without the support of others. God created us to live in relationship with other people. Therefore, we must provide the members of our Bible study classes with opportunities to build and nurture relationships with others. Here are a few suggestions for charting a course to successful fellowships.



Study your charts. God's Word contains the coordinates that can help people safely navigate through life. Every Sunday morning we gather together to study God's Word. Sunday mornings provide an excellent opportunity for members and guests to enjoy regular Christian fellowship. Give people the opportunity to visit informally before and after your Bible study session. Occasionally plan a get-acquainted activity to encourage fellowship on Sunday morning. For example, during holidays (such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Independence Day), form small groups and ask people to share a childhood memory of their family's holiday observance.



Sail with the fleet. Encourage the members and guests to your class to get to know one another by name. Have everyone wear name tags. Encourage every member to be actively involved in a care group. Contact those who are absent and let them know you missed them. Care Groups should meet for fellowship on a regular basis.



Swab the deck. Be willing to do whatever is necessary to help class members keep their relationships in tip-top shape. Be ready to respond to the needs of others in your class.



Stay on course. Provide opportunities outside of class for members and guests to build and nurture relationships. Plan at least one class fellowship event every three months. Use holidays (such as Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas) as an opportunity to have theme-related fellowships. Be creative in planning fellowships. One teacher I know planned an April 15th Fellowship and encouraged members to attend dressed in rags (had to pay taxes) or formal attire (getting a tax refund).



Send up a flare. Ask for help in planning, promoting, and implementing class fellowship events. Remember to involve others and to plan ahead. Don't let problems or difficulties sink your fellowship.