

Where do you see the theme of right love for one another?

(John speaks of fellowship four times in this letter, all in 1:3–7. The Greek word is koinonia, and it speaks of sharing in common something that is significant and important. It entails the joy and oneness in a group of people who are in accord regarding something that really matters. You share common values, beliefs, and goals. You love the same things. You pursue a common agenda.)

1:3 *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.*

2:8-11 *Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*

⁹ *Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister^[9] is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ Anyone who loves their brother and sister^[10] lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. ¹¹ But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.*

3:11 *For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.*

3:14-18 *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.*

¹⁶ *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*

3:21-24 *Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

4:7-8 *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

4:11-12 *Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

4:19-20 *We love because he first loved us.²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.*

Reflect and Discuss

1. How is Christian fellowship similar to and different from simple friendship?
2. What are the common values, beliefs and goals that Christians share?