

# Three Places of Christian Fellowship

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### The Low Place

The Low Place of Christian fellowship is the private relationship between the individual & God. This is the most important place. It's the heart of the Christian experience - personal, connected fellowship alone with one's Savior & Creator. It's the most precious, intimate aspect of the Christian life - where the adoptive nature of father God is realized, the brotherhood of Jesus is discovered, & the intimacy of the Holy Spirit. It's where one learns to hear the voice of God & encounter Him in both success & failure.

In practice, this place of Christian fellowship is both daily - expressed by ritual or habit as well as spontaneous. On one hand, the Holy Spirit invades our life experience at His own whim. On the other hand, the individual comes to God by need or desire when the situation arises. It is experienced in all kinds of times & settings with as much variety as life & people can provide. At every moment, people are reaching out to & encountering God in their lives in more ways than any one person can imagine.

Access points, those activities or life aspects that one easily engages with God are key to the Low Place of fellowship. The Christian approaches their relationship with God through these points not because God is limited to them, but because they are easy & comfortable to the Christian, God uses whatever means He chooses to engage the individual & He does so in His own time.

This is the most important place of Christian fellowship. It is the essence of the Christian walk. All of the other places of fellowship are built on it. Without it, there is no fellowship - for we

fellowship with God & then with men.

## The High Place

The High Place of Christian fellowship is the most well known for it is the most planned & best advertised Place of Christian fellowship. The high place is the corporate, congregational expression of fellowship. It's the gathering of a medium-to-large group of people for a common purpose or under a common identity. It is where people find their collective identity because it is large enough to be bigger than the individual and personal enough to put a label on.

In the High Place, personal relationships are a low priority. They defer to the activities of the collective gathering. The group itself is large enough that any individual cannot possibly have a personal relationship with everyone else involved, yet people are able to be social in a limited fashion. The gathering is scheduled, planned, organized, & simplified to maximize effectiveness over a large body of people. The feel is busy & crowded (depending on the size of the crowd). The activities are generic & inclusive; anything personal or focused being "broken down" or away from the main group.

High Place gatherings are essential to the identity of a brand, denomination, or movement. To participate in these is to be part of something larger than oneself. Those who attend these either observe, participate, join, or lead - all partial involvement of varying degrees. No one person can encompass or embody a high gathering. Even headline personalities require support teams to make these gatherings possible.

## The Middle Place

The Middle Place of fellowship is neither the High Place nor the Low. It is distinct, yet it derives its characteristics from each & benefits both in its own unique way. The Middle Place of Christian fellowship is a relational gathering of familiars for a common Christian purpose.

The place, setting & time are nearly as diverse as the Low Place of Christian fellowship - the limitation being what the participants can mutually converge on. At the same time, the experience & purpose are group centric, with each member participating in what they way they are able and uniquely suited to. In this manner, it reflects the High Place. What makes the Middle Place unique from the High Place is that it can serve group goals with individual expression, weighing on every member for their unique gifting & temperament. Healthy, balanced leadership leans on that to nurture a strong sense of participation throughout the whole group.

The relational nature of the Middle Place is personal: each member has a personal connection & preferably a personal relationship not only with God, but also with each other. This makes personality management a necessity for group facilitators - ensuring that strong personalities do not overbear & that shy folk do not disappear. The activities & purposes of Middle Place gathering are much more diverse than High Place corporate gatherings - they easily focus on single or multi-

faceted activities as deep or wide as the group's temperament allows. In this way, the Middle Place benefits the High Place by providing a personal touch & a focused environment; which the High Place cannot provide. It also benefits the Low Place by expanding the individual's spiritual life from private experience into a relational environment by design. We are not made to experience the sum of our Christian life without the fellowship of other Christians.

## Intro to Relational Spirituality

The ideal scenario for any Christian is to have a healthy expression of all three Places of Christian fellowship operating in their spiritual life.

The High Place: to be part of something larger than one's self.

The Low Place: to be essentially & vibrantly Christian.

The Middle Place: to encounter the human dimension of Relational Spirituality.

God calls us to love Him first & other people second. This is the essence of the Love Commandments (Matthew 22:37-39). Relational Spirituality, as expressed in the Middle Place of Christian fellowship, is essential to engage with both of the Love Commandments practically. Done well, it both benefits & nurtures the High & the Low Places of Christian fellowship so that the believer is engaged personally with God, relationally with other Christians, & able to be part of something larger than themselves.

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