



Illustrations by Michael Jon Woodruff

Feast Fellowship

The Feast of Tabernacles just wouldn't be the Feast without the fellowship of God's people! Read here how you can benefit most from Feast fellowship.

Key to the Festival

By David Albert

Picture yourself at the most beautiful Festival site you can imagine, the one you've always wanted to attend. Imagine that you are hearing powerful, inspiring sermons every day. Add to your imaginary Feast scene mouth-watering meals and all

the recreational opportunities you could possibly pack into one exciting week. And going on with this Festival fantasy, imagine that you are keeping this Feast *by yourself* — *all alone!* Suddenly it's just not the Feast of Tabernacles, is it?

No, the Feast just wouldn't be the same without the *fellowship* of the people of God. And because fellowship is such a major part of the Feast experience, let's review some practical pointers on how to derive the maximum benefit from Feast

of Tabernacles fellowship in 1980.

Rejoice with your brethren

Our God is a God of joy! Joy is one of the fruits of His Spirit (Gal. 5:22). And this great God of happiness, humor and joy wants us to be like Him in this attribute. So He commands us to rejoice when we observe His wonderful Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:40, Deut. 14:26).

Our marvelous God says to us, in effect: "Come to my Feast of Tabernacles and have the time of your

lives! Enjoy yourselves fully! Have fun together!" And God facilitates this happiness through the blessings He pours out during the Feast.

Of all the sermonettes I ever gave, the one that seemed to evoke the most comments over the years was one entitled "You Can't Be a Grump at the Feast of Tabernacles." Behind the humorous title was an important message I think a lot of people remembered — you really can't be a "grump" and properly observe the Feast, not when God commands us to rejoice. "Grumps" ruin the Feast for themselves and others. But joyful brethren spread through the entire congregation the priceless gift of God's Holy Spirit, a gift that makes fellowship an absolute delight.

Be hospitable

What better opportunity than the Feast could you have to fulfill the admonition to "Use hospitality one to another" (I Pet. 4:9)? With the fine facilities at our disposal and extra money to spend on food and drink, we can have some thoroughly enjoyable social occasions.

Don't let your attitude be one of trying to *get* something out of the Feast. Rather, Feast time is a time to *give* of ourselves to our brethren. A selfish attitude will only ruin the Feast, so think of ways to give.

Some of the most enjoyable social gatherings I have attended at past Feasts

have been various parties, with beverages and snacks served to the guests and some good background music. What a pleasure it can be to mix with friends under such circumstances. The costs needn't be prohibitive if everyone who can contributes something.

And just as you plan what you want to serve, give some careful thought to whom you wish to invite. Of course, you will want to invite many of your longtime friends — especially those you only get to see once a year. But don't forget to include people who might get overlooked — the widows and fatherless (Jas. 1:27) and others who would deeply appreciate the opportunity for fellowship and may not frequently get the chance. It will make you happy to see these people enjoying your hospitality.

Exercise moderation

Your fellowship during this Feast of Tabernacles will be greatly enhanced if you avoid those all-too-human extremes and exercise moderation in all things (Phil. 4:5).

Be especially careful about your use of alcohol. God's Word plainly says to "be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess" (Eph. 5:18). Why spoil your Feast and fellowship with slurred speech, foolish, inappropriate behavior, a clouded memory and a hangover because of the lack of moderation? It simply isn't worth it, and

it degrades the Feast for everyone.

The same applies to extremes such as eating too much, staying up too late, driving too long and too fast — an open invitation to accidents — and too much recreation, which can subtract from the Feast's spiritual meaning. Ask God to help you exercise self-control in all things. It will greatly add to your enjoyment.

Let's come before God with rejoicing, and make our Festival fellowship pleasing and acceptable to God!

What Fellowship Really Means

By Gary Antion

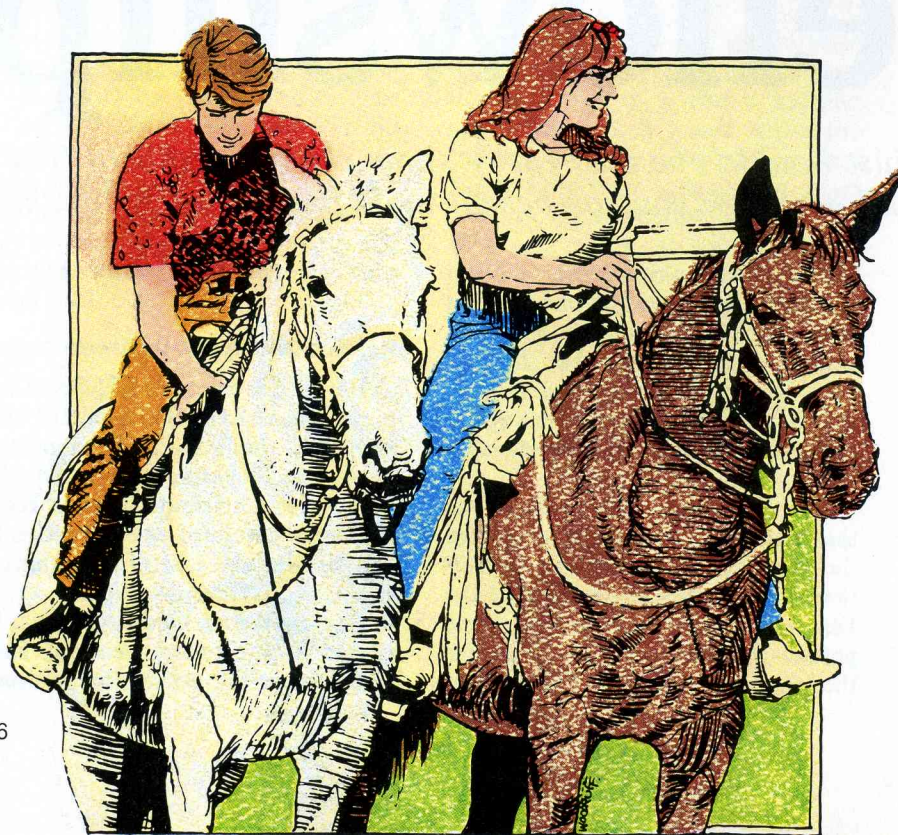
If Jesus Christ appeared in human form at the Feast of Tabernacles where you were attending, would you want to meet Him? I should say so! Everyone would be standing in line for the opportunity to shake His hand and fellowship with Him.

But the idea of fellowshiping with Christ is not that outlandish. At the Feast this year we will have the opportunity to meet dozens of brethren in whom dwells a little of Jesus Christ through the Spirit of God (Phil. 2:5). Yet some will be content to go off by themselves, and others will stick like glue to their small, select group of friends and thereby miss the wonderful experience of fellowshiping with someone new!

What is fellowship?

What does *fellowship* really mean? The word denotes companionship. It carries the feeling of sharing and of being a partner. The various Greek words used for *fellowship* in the New Testament mean "common," "partaker" and "communicate." So fellowship is more than just a passing acquaintance. It is more than a mere "Hello, how are you doing?"

Our fellowshiping involves greetings (Gal. 2:9), giving (Gal. 6:2, 10), conversation (Mal. 3:16), exhortation (Heb. 3:13) and hospitality (Heb. 13:1-2). It comes from God and is made possible through Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God binds us together more strongly than any mere human



organization such as a labor union, fraternity or social club. Notice what the apostle John wrote:

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. . . if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:3-4, 7).

This fellowship is not reserved for the few but is to be extended to others to make them feel loved and accepted in Christ's Body as well.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

A close relationship

The relationship we have with each other in God's Church is to be very close. We are to be "knit together in love" (Col. 2:2). This relationship is possible because we understand the same doctrines, have access to the same faith, worship the same God, have the same Spirit, believe in the same future and adhere to the same type of government now.

The prophet Amos questioned, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). As the Spirit of God dwells in us richly, we have that unity we need to move ahead without division (I Cor. 12:12-13).

Even though we may not share personally at all times with each brother in the faith, we should have the same care for each. Paul stated "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another" (verse 25). We are becoming more godly and qualifying for eternal life by our love for the brethren (I John 3:11, 14-18).

Be considerate of differences

What about personality differences? How may we share with some-

one of opposite likes? While we are to care for all in a loving manner, we may not have a closeness in all areas.

For instance, if you like to go dancing and a brother or sister in the Church doesn't like dancing at all, you would not want to plan on inviting him or her to a grand ball with you. You both would be uncomfortable.

Other people may be serious and have a hard time relaxing — they may be scintillating to talk with but do not enjoy games or cards. So, if an evening of games and cards is planned, it would be awkward to invite such a brother or sister to the social occasion. On the other hand, if you planned a Friday evening dinner or an evening of conversation, they would be perfect guests. Be sure to consider people's likes and dislikes in planning social occasions.

This year at the Feast of Tabernacles let's all strive to have godly fellowship with one another and look for Christ in the people of God, remembering that we have done unto Christ whatever we do unto the least of the brethren (Matt. 25:40).

Tips for Singles

By Richard Rice

The Feast of Tabernacles is often spoken of in terms of the family rejoicing together and portraying God's Kingdom of peace and happiness. But while the members of God's Church are all part of a great spiritual family, many do not have physical families.

There are thousands of single people in the Church of God in this modern era. This group is made up of young unmarried adults, widows or widowers, divorced individuals and older unmarriages. They are an important part of the Church.

The Feast is intended as a time of rejoicing, learning and happiness for them as single people, too!

A special opportunity

Although you as a single person may not realize it, you can enjoy a



special blessing because you are single. Notice: "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord" (I Cor. 7:32).

In other words, you as a single person don't have to look after a mate or children. You can better "attend upon the Lord without distraction" (verse 35). How? You actually serve Christ by helping the brethren! As a single person your time ought to be more flexible and more available for service to God and His people. This marvelous opportunity can make the Feast tremendously rewarding for you as a single — if you take advantage of it.

Prepare for the Feast

Since the Feast of Tabernacles is the high point of the year, it makes sense to prepare in advance to assure its success. Prepare spiritually. Pray about the Feast and study its meaning in the Bible. Ask God to guide you in your planning.

Emphasize in your mind the importance of God's principles of giving, sharing and outgoing concern. Turn your mind away from selfish motives. Engage in active service to help others make this Feast an occasion they will long remember. Deemphasize the "looking for a mate" approach. God really does know your needs — and He has promised to supply them. That includes finding you a wife or husband. Have faith in God's power to bring the right person into your life.

Give of yourself to others, not thinking selfishly of what you can get, and God will bless you. "Give, and it shall be

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Fellowship

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given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Luke 6:38).

How you can serve

With thousands of people observing God's Festival worldwide, there will be many opportunities at every Feast site to serve the brethren. Here are a few suggestions to consider:

- Remember the widow and orphan. God commands that those who have an abundance should be generous and share their blessings with the less fortunate (Deut. 14:29). Take widows or others who may be on a meager budget out to dinner. Buy flowers for somebody who may be lonely or neglected. Buy gifts for children of needy families (check with parents first for what is appropriate). Treat a needy family to an outing — perhaps a park or amusement center. Do something special to brighten the Feast for those who are handicapped. Make new friends by inviting others over for fellowship and snacks.

- Provide transportation. If you have a car and the room, check to see if anyone needs transportation to the Feast. Once there, you could offer rides to and from services.

- Date widely and emphasize fellowship. Visit new people of many age groups. Involving yourself in family activities at the Feast will broaden your outlook on life. Always maintain proper conduct during a date.

- Be service minded and enthusiastic. Volunteer for whatever responsibility your local church is assigned. Look for spontaneous opportunities to serve — carrying luggage, opening doors and visiting before services.

- Be responsive to organized singles' activities. Whether it's a dance, party or special dinner, join the group and have fun. Don't be a drag and hold out!

If you apply these points they will pay generous dividends. These principles will help you learn to fear God and rejoice as a single person in God's Church, and give you spiritual rewards that will last for eternity. □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

have been revitalized — been put back on the track.

Once again we in the Church can look forward to a new issue knowing that we will be given instruction, correction and inspiration in its pages. Unfortunately this was not always the case. But things have changed — for the better! It is thrilling to see how God is using you to set the ministry, college, SEP [Summer Educational Program] and the Church publications on the right track. So much confusion has been eliminated. The Church is being given right direction. There seems to be a fresher spirit among God's people. There is a greater sense of purpose and urgency to get the WORK done. And that's good!

Mr. Armstrong, it seems more apparent than ever why God brought you back from death. It's frightening to think about it, but it appears now there may not have even been a Church preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom if God hadn't restored you to good, vibrant health.

My family, and I'm sure the Church as a whole, is deeply gratified to see you back at the helm.

I was reading your autobiography the other day out of an old *PT* magazine (a 1961 issue). In that article you mentioned the years of deprivation your family underwent just so the precious Gospel message could get out. Well, I'm just so grateful to see that that suffering wasn't undergone in vain. *The PT* is back! *The Good News* is back! The college is back! The broadcast and telecast are back! And the WORK as a whole is back on the track!

But we can't stop here. Now we have to press on more powerfully and with more determination than ever before. Everything appears to be set for one great push on getting the message out before the time of the end.

Thank you again, Mr. Armstrong, for hanging in there — for letting the Eternal and the Father use you in doing Their WORK.

We pray for you daily. We pray that God will give you a strong heart and the eyesight you need to do God's Work.

We pray that God will give you bulldog tenacity that characterized Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

We pray that God will give you the strength necessary to fulfill the great commission.

Thank you for all the sacrifices you have made for me, my family and the Church.

Thank you for being faithful to God and His Gospel message.

Continue on, Mr. Armstrong!

We LOVE you!

We are with you because we know the living God is with you.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Pedersen
Minneapolis, Minn.

May 24, 1980

Dear Mr. Armstrong,

I've just finished reading your "Personal" in the May issue of *The Good News*, on letting God fight your battles. I've been wanting to write for a long time and thank you personally for ALL your efforts on our behalf. After reading this article I just couldn't put it off any longer.

Each issue of *The Good News* magazine these last few months has been invaluable from cover to cover. It never ceases to amaze me, the timeliness with which these articles reach us, but then the living God who knows our every need, is after all, overseeing all things. I thank Him daily for His great plan for mankind and for sending us, the apostle such as He has, one through which the living Christ is now working to perfect His Church. Your love and concern for all of us is an ever shining example.

May God bless you, Mr. Armstrong, for this love, and for the strength and endurance you've shown, which I know comes directly from our Creator. As you said, we need only do our part, and Christ will return to find a holy, righteous perfect Church. How perfect and right the works of God, and praise be to Him through which all good things come.

With sincere love and
great appreciation,

Lynne Neer
Helena, Mont. □