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Cups: An Illustration Of Koinonia

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As believers in Yeshua (Jesus' Hebrew name), we are the body of Messiah. As such, we are divinely connected to each other. We are in Kingdom of God relationship with each other. We may not always feel that way; it may not always look that way; but as far as the Kingdom is concerned, it is that way. And so, we are in fellowship with each other. The word fellowship is so cheaply used these days, as are many other important words in the Bible, that it has lost the power of its meaning.

The Greek word for fellowship is koinonia. Koinonia has also been translated sharing, partaker, participation, partnership, communication, and communion. Each of these terms more deeply explains the other. Koinonia involves far more than getting together for a "covered dish dinner."

Think of it this way! Think of the spiritual relationships we have with each other as cups that are setting around on the table of the Lord. The Lord has graciously poured some wine into each of us as cups. The wine represents the blood of his life that He poured out for us.

As members of His body, we are supposed to pour out of our cups into one another's cups. The more we pour and receive from each other's cups, the fuller our cups become. It's the principle of the loaves and fish. The more they were divided and shared, the more they multiplied. The life of His blood comes to us by His Holy Spirit through revelation, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and spiritual experiences, and these things change our lives.

I once envisioned a table full of cups. These cups represented people in the body of Messiah. Many of them thought their cups were full of His wine. They did not think others had anything new to pour into their cups. They would gladly pour out of their own cups of what they thought they knew, but would not receive from others. As far as they could tell, the wine in all the other cups looked the same, and they surmised that no one had anything to give that they did not already have. If by chance someone's wine seemed different, they weren't about to mix it in with theirs. They failed to see that the blood of the Lamb, as with the bread of His body, is measured out in various kinds of gifts and ministries for us to share, and in the sharing of the parts, we might partake of the whole.

As a result, the cup became scattered about. Though they were still on the Lord's table, very much loved by Him, they had no true, deep, abiding, life-changing fellowship as a people knitted and fitly joined together.

Then, a strange thing happened. As I looked more closely, I saw that the cups were not filled with wine as they thought. The wine was mixed with pride. The more they separated themselves from touching each other spiritually, the more that pride filled the cups. Remember the scripture says that "pride puffs up?" Then it adds, "If any man thinks that he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." 1 Cor. 8:1-8.

As time went by, however, they began to recognize their lack, their neediness, their emptiness, and

their loneliness. They humbled themselves and began to reach out to each other, permitting their need for Yeshua in each other to be known.

Little by little, they began to pour the wine of Yeshua's life into each other's cups that they might receive more of Him through each other as the body. A little getting together here. A little getting together there. A few failed attempts, but gradually more and more life was shared. Cups weren't just clanging against each other, hoping that some wine-life might splash over. Real pouring-out and receiving began to take place.

When I looked again, that strange thing had reversed itself. Those cups were being filled again with the wine of His life, flushing out the pride. That's koinonia!