

¹¹For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—¹²**that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.**

A mutual exchange. "The communion of saints" (The Apostles Creed)

Paul was empowered by the Spirit and he is a Christian like all others, who can receive from others, benefit from others, and have true fellowship with them.

1 Cor. 3:1-9 - He is the *same* as all other Christians.

1 Cor. 4:7 – All gifts are given by God

2 Cor. 11-12 – This same man wants to commune with servants of Caesar's household. He gets great benefit from it!

Acts 19:1-7 – Paul looked for the Spirit in people, not their credentials. All else was irrelevant. Do you? Would you prefer to be in the company of some famous non-Christian or the lowliest of Christians? This is the Doctrine of the Church.

How does Paul differ from the Pope, *the vicar of Christ*? Papism is the antithesis of Scripture.

Matthew 20:25-28 - Jesus foreknew that the church would become compromised.

1 Peter 5:1-3 – Peter encourages the elders to be among the flock.

Paul has the authority of the office of apostle, but the humility to take his seat among the people.

The church is a fellowship, not a place for one man to speak and others sit and listen.

2 Peter 1:1 – Peter, though he is an apostle, writes to people as having faith of equal standing, people living as "strangers scattered abroad" (1 Peter 1:1).

1 John 1:1-4 – John speak of this fellowship making "our" joy complete.

The NT church is described in terms of fellowship where the emphasis is on the faith of the individual members of the church as well as the preacher.

Faith as evidenced by changed lives (experiences) and by an astounding understanding of the Scriptures. Grow! Paul reveled in the growth he heard of and longed to be with the Romans.

Romans 15:30 – Paul needed their prayers. Imagine! Fellowship! (see 2 Cor. 1:8-11; Philippians 1:19).