

**ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES**  
**TOOLS FOR LIFE**  
**SENIOR PASTOR JOHN A. TRUSTY, D.MIN.**

---

**SOMETHING MISSING**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience necessary for the Christian if he is to become truly like Jesus in life and ministry. Through Holy Spirit baptism, Jesus lives most fully in the believer. As a result of this intimate connection with Jesus, the believer will begin to experience his greatest victories over sin and will develop the most meaningful relationship possible with his Savior.

The relationship between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and genuine Christian fellowship is also essential for the Christian to understand and experience. Even though we may receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we will not grow spiritually as God intends without a meaningful, mutually dependent fellowship with other Spirit-filled believers. To become Spirit filled, and remain somewhat isolated and independent of other Spirit-filled Christians, will not only hinder our spiritual growth but may lead to the loss of the fullness of the Spirit's presence in our life.

Bible-focused denominations, including Seventh-day Adventists, tend to be very intellectual in their religion. We know many vital truths of the Bible. Our evangelistic efforts focus on those truths that set us apart from other denominations. Hence, many who choose to become church members do so because of those truths.

One fact that has often troubled me is the general weakness of Seventh-day Adventists in the area of Christian fellowship. We are a rather independent group of believers. One has to have somewhat of an independent spirit to become a Seventh-day Adventist in the first place, for choosing to keep the seventh-day Sabbath sets us apart from the majority of other Christians.

I have often read the description of the believers following Pentecost:

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

I knew we were “right on,” as a church, when it came to doctrine. However, when it came to fellowship we didn’t fare so well. I have observed that most Adventists are hard workers who provide for their families and do their best to attend the Sabbath morning worship service. Most church services are somewhat formal, with little or no time for interaction between believers. Hence, the average fellowship consists of warm greetings before and after church. Then most make their way home to return the next Sabbath. Many of our churches have a midweek prayer meeting, which usually consists of a biblical presentation by the pastor and a season of prayer. However, most of our church members feel they are too busy or too tired to attend this midweek service.

I have often felt that as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, fellowship should play a more important role than it does. The next seven devotionals will show why Spirit-filled Christians must enter into close fellowship with others who are Spirit filled if they want to grow into the fullness of Christ and be ready for His return.

## Personal Reflection and Discussion

What are the characteristics of the early Christian church, as listed in Acts 2:42?

Reflect on how much genuine Christian fellowship you are now having, or have had in the past.

Why do you think Christian fellowship is important in one's life today?

Why do you think Christian fellowship is necessary to be ready for Christ's second coming?

From *40 Days: Prayers and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming* by Dennis Smith, 2009. Reprinted with permission.