

THE CHURCH

2. The Church Is Like A Family – Part 1



Introduction

In our previous study we began to learn about the church. We found that there are pictures or illustrations that are used in the Word of God to teach us what the church is like. Many people think of the church as a building of wood or bricks, but the Bible tells us that it is a building made of people. The people are the stones that make up the church, laid on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Another picture that is used to teach us about the church is that of a family. Let us see what we can learn from this illustration.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:19

At the end of this verse in Ephesians 2 it tells us that we are members of the family of God. God is our Father.

A. GOD IS OUR FATHER

How do we become members of the family of God? When we were born into this world, we were born into a family with a father and a mother. This is how we become members of the family of God too! We need to be born into God's family, and this miracle takes place when we believe in the Lord Jesus and receive him into our life as our personal Lord and Saviour. Look at John 1:12-13.

We don't become a Christian by being born into a Christian family, or by becoming a church member and being baptised. It is only when we are born again by the Holy Spirit that we become God's children. This is what Jesus says in John 3:6-7. Now we can call God our Heavenly Father.

B. GOD CARES FOR US AS FATHER

Now that God is our Father, he will care for us as a father does. Most fathers love their children, although they are not perfect and do make mistakes. However our Heavenly Father loves us perfectly and never makes mistakes.

A small child doesn't worry where he will get his food from, or how he will get new clothes, as he trusts his father to provide these things. Nor is a child afraid of being harmed, because he knows his daddy will protect him. In the same way, when we are born into God's family, God wants us to trust him like a small child trusts his human father. He promises to provide our needs and protect us from harm, because he loves us. We need only trust him. Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-33.

C. GOD DISCIPLINES US AS A FATHER

A good father, who really loves his child, will also train and discipline them. He wants them to grow up to be obedient and unselfish. In fact the Word of God commands fathers to discipline their children! In the same way God disciplines us, not to harm us, but for our ultimate good. Look at Hebrews 12:5-11. What does it show when God disciplines us?

When God disciplines us it proves we are really his sons. Usually we discipline our own children, not other people's children, so when God disciplines us it shows we belong to him and he loves us. He does this by allowing things to happen in our lives, so we learn the lessons he is trying to teach us.

What is God's purpose in disciplining us? See Hebrews 12:10-11. As we can see he is doing this for our good, not because he is angry at us, but so we will become holy and live a righteous life. Let us learn from the things that come into our lives and allow them to change us and make us more like Jesus. This is God's purpose for all his children.

D. WE ARE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN GOD'S FAMILY

How many brothers and sisters do you have in your human family? They are your brothers and sisters because you have the same father and mother. This is true in the family of God. All those who have been born into God's family are brothers and sisters. This means we belong to a very big family, with people from every race and country, and of all different ages.

Our human family is important, and our spiritual family, the family of God, should also be important to us. God wants us to be concerned for our brothers and sisters, especially those who are suffering or are weak, just as we are for members of our human family. Read Romans 12:10. Let's love and honour one another as God's Word says.

Conclusion

We have only just begun to learn about the family of God. In our next study we will learn about the privileges of belonging to this family, and also our responsibilities.

Do you have any needs right now? Remember, God is your Heavenly Father, and he wants to meet those needs, whether it is for provision or protection. Trust him! He loves you far more than you will ever realise.