

THE CHURCH

3. The Church Is Like A Family – Part 2



Introduction

We have been learning about the church, and we have looked at several pictures that teach us what the church is like. In our previous study we saw that the church is like a family. When we believe in Jesus and receive him as our Lord and Saviour, we are 'born' into God's family and God becomes our Father. In this study we will look at the privileges of belonging to God's family, and then the responsibilities.

A. THE PRIVILEGES OF BELONGING TO THE FAMILY OF GOD

A. We receive the family name

When we are born into this world we are given a name by our parents, and in many cultures we also receive the name of our father. When we are born into God's family we are called children of God, because God is our Heavenly Father. This is a wonderful privilege. Look at 1 John 3:1.

B. We receive the family likeness

Often you hear people say, 'Oh, you look like your father!' Sometimes people become more like their parents as they grow older. When we are born into God's family, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us, so we become more and more like our Heavenly Father. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18.

C. We receive the family wealth

This sounds good doesn't it? When parents die they usually leave what they have to their children, so if their father is wealthy, they will receive more. However, whether our earthly father is wealthy or poor, our Heavenly Father has every spiritual blessing, and when we belong to him we inherit these blessings. What are some of those blessings listed in Ephesians 1:3-5, 7, 13-14? There are even more blessings stored up for God's children when they enter Heaven one day.

B. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF BELONGING TO THE FAMILY OF GOD

Although it is good to belong to a family, there are responsibilities involved. Children may be expected to help with the household chores, or help look after their younger brothers or sisters. The Bible teaches that children should obey and respect their parents, as this pleases the Lord. It is the same in the family of God.

A. We must obey our Heavenly Father

Just as we are to obey our earthly father, we are also to obey our Heavenly Father. This is what it says in John 14:21, 23, 24. How do we show that we love God, according to these verses? We are clearly told that we love God by obeying the commands of Jesus, and his commands come from the Father.

A parent likes obedient children! In fact most people prefer obedient children! Children who are disobedient and rebellious are unpleasant. God also likes obedient children! He loves us, but for those who obey him, he will have close fellowship with. If we desire to be close to him, experience

his presence in our lives and have our prayers answered, then we need to obey what he tells us to do in his Word.

B. We must love one another

A family is made up of different members. Apart from our parents, we may have brothers and sisters too, and we have a commitment and responsibility to them. The same is true in the family of God. Perhaps our responsibility to our brothers and sisters in Christ can be summed up in one word: LOVE. Look at Romans 12:10. Our responsibility is to love one another. This love is not the world's kind of love, which is selfish and sensual, but it is a love which is pure and self-giving. What was the new commandment that Jesus gave? Read John 15:12-13.

Conclusion

Families are God's idea! He created the first family, and families have become the building blocks of our society. Sadly many families today are broken, but there is another family we can all be part of, and that is the family of God. Just as we are born into a human family, we are born into God's family when we put our trust in Jesus to save us. God is now our Heavenly Father and has promised to take care of us. Now we have a Father who is perfect, and whose love for us is immense. Not only that, we have brothers and sisters in Christ, all around the world. What a privilege! What a blessing! Let's live to please him.