

Hello ILF family, I hope this devotional finds you well.

I'd like for you to imagine a coal burning brightly in a fire. As long as it remains with the other coals, it continues to glow and provide warmth. However, if you remove that single coal and place it alone, it quickly loses its heat and becomes cold. Similarly, when we stay connected to the family of God, our faith is kept alive and vibrant. In isolation, our spiritual strength can diminish. I was reminded of this in as I was reading the Word this morning.

I have been overly busy as our family is moving far away from where we currently live. It has taken much of my time and I have not prioritized gathering together with friends and loved ones to laugh, pray, convict each other and grow together.

I have been convicted today of the importance of this and felt maybe you may have struggled in this area as well, so I thought I would share my heart with you today. In summary, we need each other, we need to see Jesus in each other, and we cannot serve the kingdom well without each other.

In Ephesians 2:19, Paul writes, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." This passage reminds us that through Christ, we are united as one family, sharing in the love and grace of our Heavenly Father. Another powerful example is found in Acts 2:42-47, where the early church is described as a community that devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. They shared everything they had and met together with glad and sincere hearts. This depiction of the early believers exemplifies the strength and unity that comes from being part of God's family.

Even Jesus emphasized the importance of spiritual family. In Matthew 12:48-50, when told His mother and brothers were waiting to speak to Him, He replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? ... For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Jesus was highlighting that our bonds in the family of God transcend even our biological ties.

As we think about these truths, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you. Thank you for being part of this incredible family of God. Your love, support, and dedication to one another and to our shared mission are invaluable. Together, we reflect the heart of God to a world in need, showing them what it means to belong to a family that transcends all earthly barriers.

Let us continue to cherish and invest in our relationships within the family of God. Let us encourage one another, bear each other's burdens, and spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24-25). In doing so, we not only grow stronger in our faith but also become a powerful witness of God's love to those around us.