

Biblical Pillars for a Family Foundation

Pillar Ten: Church as Family

So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household (family). Eph. 2:19

Introduction

The church is, as much as it is anything, a FAMILY – a family of families. Failing to live in that reality diminishes our spiritual growth and joy and the Lord's lofty goals for the church.

To begin to grasp this important truth, turn to **John 17:13-21** where in Jesus' prayer after the Last Supper, shortly before being arrested, he asks the Father for things He knows to be most important. Interestingly, part of that prayer is about us. Then we'll look at a short passage in Matthew and in Luke where Jesus tells us the most important thing about family.

Setting the Stage

- A. **John 17:13-21** – *Our unity displays to the world the reality of Christ.*
- B. **Matthew 22:35-40** – *Love the Lord your God above all earthly loves.*
- C. **Luke 14:25-26** – *In comparison to loving Him, we must hate our family.*

Family: God's Purpose for the Church

- I. God first purpose for the church is to **join Him** as Family (just as it was Israel)
 - A. God has always sought people, even though they turn from Him
 1. Adam – Genesis 3:8, ff
 2. Noah – Genesis 6:13, ff
 3. Abraham – Genesis 12-24
 4. The nation of Israel – Genesis 18, ff
 5. Moses – Exodus 3
 6. Samuel – 1 Samuel 3
 7. David – 1 Samuel 16 and Solomon – 2 Chronicles 1:7, ff
 8. Elijah – 1 Kings 17
 9. Isaiah – Isaiah 1 (cf., Isaiah 6) and Jeremiah – Jeremiah 1:4
 10. Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Nahum – First Chapters
 11. Joseph – Matthew 1:18-21
 12. Mary – Luke 1:26-38
 13. Disciples – Matthew 4:18, ff.
 14. All of us – John 1:9-13, Luke 9:10, 1 John 2:2, Eph. 1:3-6
 15. Philip and Nathanael John 1:43-51
 16. Saul/Paul – Acts 9
 - B. God sees these people as His possession and wants them to be family with Him and with each other
 1. Exodus 3:7, 10
 2. **Psalm 95:7**
 3. Book of Ruth and the Kinsman-Redeemer theme
 4. Isaiah 43:6-7; 51:16; Isaiah 63:8, 15-16
 5. Jeremiah 7:23*
 6. Romans 9:25-26*
 7. 1 Timothy 5:1-2
 8. Hebrews 12:4-11
 9. **1 Peter 2:9**
 10. Revelation 18:4

- C. God's desire is to dwell among us
 - 1. Leviticus 26:11-12
 - 2. 1 Samuel 6:13
 - 3. Exodus 25:8
 - 4. Ezekiel 43:9
 - 5. John 1:14
 - 6. John 14:23
 - 7. John 15:4, 7
 - 8. 1 Corinthians 6:15, 19
 - 9. 2 Corinthians 6:16
 - 10. Revelation 21:3

- D. God's desire is that the attractiveness of that family reveals His goodness
 - 1. 1 Kings 10:1-9, esp. v. 9 Queen of Sheba "Blessed be the Lord..."
 - 2. Isaiah 26:15 "You have increased the nation (and) are glorified"
 - 3. Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine... glorify your Father"
 - 4. 1 Peter 2:12 "Keep your behavior excellent... that they may glorify God"

- II. God's second purpose for the church is to **encourage itself** in Him as Family
 - A. God wants His family to know joy
 - 1. Matthew 13:20; 13:44; 25:21
 - 2. John 15:11, 17:13
 - 3. Acts 13:52
 - 4. Galatians 5:22
 - 5. 1 Peter 1:8 (See also 2 Peter 1:2-3)

 - B. God wants His family to be strengthened and encouraged in Him
 - 1. Ephesians 4:12-16

 - C. God wants the church to build each other up:
 - 1. 1 Thess. 5:11
 - 2. 1 Cor. 14:12
 - 3. Col. 2:6-7

- III. God's final purpose is for the church is to **adopt others** into His Family
 - A. Matthew 28:18-20 "Going, therefore, make disciples, baptizing them..."
 - B. Acts 1:8 "And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and..."

- IV. Two passages which tie it together
 - A. Ephesians 4
 - 1. Walk in unity for you are One Body under one Lord (vv. 1-6)
 - 2. You're all – *each* believer – gifted for service (vv. 7-16)
 - Including leaders who prepare and equip,
 - Including all others who exercise various kinds of service
 - The result will be a *Mature* body
 - 3. Lay aside the "old self" and put on "the new man" (vv. 17-24)
 - 4. Speak and relate with each other in a way that builds up (vv. 25-32)

 - B. 1 Corinthians 12
 - 1. All in the Body are gifted for the common good of all (vv. 1-11, esp. v. 7)
 - 2. We need each other because we are connected (vv. 12-31)

