

Day 17

Strengthening Family Ties!

His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:5a

Be full of love for others, following the example of Christ who loved you and gave Himself to God as a sacrifice to take away your sins. Ephesians 5:2

Love your spiritual family. 1 Peter 2:17

Sometimes being a part of a large family has its benefits and limitations. Over the past year, my sisters and I planned smaller focused times called "Cousin Crew" outings. This gave us one-on-one time to get to know our grandkids and great nieces/nephews. It was a huge hit and drew us together. We got to see the talents, personalities, and strengths at a level we hadn't seen before. It was a lot of work on our part, but the littles are already talking about the next round of "Cousin Crew" outings!

In Ephesians 1:5, we gain more insight into God's plan and that includes being adopted into His "FAMILY" at salvation. God is love and the most important lesson He wants for us on earth is how to love. Of course, God wants us to love everyone, but He is particularly concerned that we learn to love others in the "family", the "family of Christ". Why is this a priority? Because God wants His "family" to be known for its love more than anything else.

Jesus said our love for each other is our greatest witness to the world. John 13:35 says "Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples." Four out of the Ten Commandments talk about relationships with God and the other six deal with relationships with people. Relationships matter!

If our love is the greatest witness to NW Ohio, how can we strengthen our relationships at Dayspring?

In the Purpose Driven Life devotional, Rick Warren encourages that "Real fellowship is so much more than just showing up at services. It is experiencing life together and it includes unselfish loving, honest sharing, practical serving, sacrificial giving, sympathetic comforting, and all the other "one another" commands found in the New Testament."

Interactions that create fellowship and strengthen relationships can be simple or more involved. Some practical ways we experienced this at Dayspring this past year: While cleaning the pews between services, four of us stopped and encouraged one another; Studying the Purpose Driven Life in a small group setting which allowed us to get to know church family at a deeper level; Participating in Serve Day pulling weeds and painting together allowed us to partner and show love to the community; Being a part of the Christmas Spectacular facilitated using our talents together for God's Glory.

Reflection:

How can I start treating other believers like members of my own family?

Does my level of involvement demonstrate that I love and am committed to God's family?

What one step can I take today to connect with another believer at a more genuine, heart-to-heart level?