

Encounter Church
Sunday July 13, 2025

The Power of First
The Greatest Family in the World

Acts 20:7(NKJV)- “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,”

1 Corinthians 16:2(NKJV)- “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside,”

Revelation 1:10(NKJV)- “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day,”

This is the earliest reference in Christian literature to the first day of the week as “The Lord’s Day.”

WHY DO WE GATHER ON THE FIRST DAY OF EACH WEEK?

John 20:1- “Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.”

I think when we gather on the “first day of each week” we should start acting like Jesus is still alive!

HOW DO WE SAY IT? “LET’S HAVE CHURCH!!!”

Matthew 16:18 (NLT)- “.... and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.”

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The Bible tells us that the church is people! PEOPLE! There are about twelve definitions of the church in the Bible but the one I like the most is the one that says that the church is A FAMILY!

It’s the family of God. And just like your family and my family there are some characteristics of the Family of God that I want to look at this morning.

The Bible teaches that no Christian is an individual believer. Once you become a child of God you become part of God’s family which is all the other believers all over the world.

There is no such thing as a Lone Ranger Christian! The Bible says that we are members of one another.

When you became a Christian you not only get a relationship with God but with all the other Christians all over the world!

So what is the Church?

PLEASE ALLOW THE BIBLE TO DEFINE THE CHURCH!

1. A Place to Love One Another

John 13:34,35(NLT)- “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

That’s one of the first tasks as the church. LOVE ONE ANOTHER! That’s one of the characteristics of the church family, LOVE!

1John 4:7,8-(NLT) “Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

Sixteen times in the Bible we are commanded to love one another. We are a family and families stick together and love one another.

2. A Place to Accept One Another

Romans 15:7-(NLT) “Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.”

First we should love one another then we should accept one another.

Everybody needs acceptance, why, because no bodies perfect! We’ve all got hang-ups, we’ve all got mistakes.

The church is for imperfect people. If you’re perfect you don’t need the church. We’re all being developed and are growing and maturing.

It’s sad to say but most people are accepted based on their performance. The way they look, the way they dress, their economic status or their education.

Jesus accepted people regardless of their place in life, with their hang-ups, with their problems and difficulties.

Why did he do that? Because you can’t help someone until you first accept them for who they are. ***If you’re criticizing them they’re not open to change.***

Everybody needs a place they're accepted for who they are and where they are. That doesn't mean they won't change. It just means they're accepted that way.

John 3:17-(NLT) "God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."

3. A Place to Greet One Another

Romans 16:16-(NLT) "Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings."

(MSG)- "Holy hugs all around! All the churches of Christ send their warmest greetings!"

In this last chapter it's interesting what the Apostle Paul does inspired by the Holy Spirit. When he closes out the letter to the Christians at Rome he list 26 different names of people he wants to say hello too.

Why did God allow Paul to put this in the Bible? ***He did this to show us the importance of the individual. PEOPLE COUNT! PEOPLE MATTER!***

Greet one another. WHY! Because people matter! Everybody wants to feel significant! Everybody wants to feel needed. And when we greet each other it says that you are important to me. YOU'RE AWESOME!

Greet one another! WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

4. A Place to Serve One Another

Galatians 5:13-(NLT)- For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."

In our society we have a sit and watch syndrome. It's kind of the attitude of let's let the professionals do it instead of getting involved ourselves.

We don't play football anymore we watch it. We don't play golf anymore we watch it. We don't play tennis anymore, we turn on the TV and watch it.

Then we come to church and do the same thing. The Bible tells us that every Christian is a minister.

1Peter 4:10-(NLT) "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another."

5. A Place we Encourage One Another

1Thessalonians 5:11-(NLT) “So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.”

How many of you need encouragement on a regular basis? Everybody needs encouragement. You never get enough.

The Bible says that the church is to be an encouragement station! When people leave here on Sunday they should go out with a lift and not a load. It ought to be a blessing, not a burden. It ought to be something that builds you up and not tears you down.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (NLT)- “Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. ***Encourage each other***. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.”

CONCLUSION: The church is a family where we love one another, accept one another, greet one another serve one another and encourage one another.

Hebrews 10:25- (NLT) “And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

When you find a place that you love others, you’re going to be loved. When you find a place that you accept others, you’re going to be accepted. When you find a place where you greet others you’re going to be greeted. When you find a place you serve others, you’re going to be served. When you find a place you encourage others, you’re going to be encouraged.

When you’ve found this place, you’ve found family! You’ve found a place to belong! A place all your own! The place God has placed you!

What would your week look if on the “first day of the week” you gathered with family and were loved, accepted, greeted, served and encouraged?

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO YOU THROUGH THIS MESSAGE?