

God's Community - God's Plan for the church

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[0 : 00] What does the Bible say about the church of God? It's a community. It's God's community. And God's plan for His church is that we be, amongst other things, family. Galatians 6 verse 10 it says, As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. The household of faith. God's family. We're members of His household. The household of faith. The household of our God, our Father.

Ephesians 2 verse 19 it says, Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

Paul encourages Timothy in 1 Timothy 3 verse 15. He says, Knowing how he ought to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

He wasn't talking about how to behave inside a building, some kind of church building, or even during a church service, but how to behave in the house, in the house, the family of God.

It's a beautiful picture, this concept of family. It's a beautiful picture, this concept of family. That the church is family. A household of faith. A family of faith. Brothers and sisters of faith.

[1 : 20] Joined together. And we're all on level pegging the still order and headship, but ultimately we are all brethren. Matthew 23 verse 8. Our Lord says, But be not ye called rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.

We are all brethren. How then should we behave in God's family? What are the good things about family? What is good family behaviour? Consideration. Compassion. Communication. Love. Peace.

1 Corinthians 12 verse 25. It says, That members should have the same care one for another. 1 Corinthians 12 verse 25. When I think of family, I think of relationships. 2 Corinthians 12 verse 25. It says, That's a beautiful picture, isn't it?

2 Corinthians 12 verse 26. When I think of family, I think of the privileges and the joys. 3 Corinthians 12 verse 26. What privileges we have. 3 Corinthians 12 verse 26. Truly consider this, Saint. 4 Corinthians 12 verse 26. Your privileges and rights.

4 Corinthians 12 verse 26. We are sons and daughters with unlimited access to our Heavenly Father. 5 Corinthians 12 verse 26. We can enjoy His love and His guidance. 5 Corinthians 12 verse 26. We can learn and grow. 6 Corinthians 12 verse 26. We can know His provision and care.

[2 : 40] 6 Corinthians 12 verse 26. And being in a family means not only rights, but responsibilities. 6 Corinthians 12 verse 26. We belong to a family. 7 Corinthians 12 verse 26. And in a very real sense, this is that family.

7 Corinthians 12 verse 26. Our spiritual home is the church of God. 8 Corinthians 12 verse 26. It's the people of God that are our brothers and sisters. 8 Corinthians 12 verse 26. As we can gather together, God willing, when we can. 9 Corinthians 12 verse 27. As Christians, we are family members.

9 Corinthians 12 verse 27. We're members of one another. 9 Corinthians 12 verse 27. And we each can make a contribution and play our own part. 10 Corinthians 12 verse 27. Not everyone has the privilege of being adopted into God's family.

10 Corinthians 12 verse 27. So let's learn to treasure that, that relationship that we have with God and with one another. 11 Corinthians 12 verse 27. Another joy we have from being part of God's community, His church, is unity.

11 Corinthians 12 verse 27. And we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. 11 Corinthians 12 verse 27. Unto a perfect man. Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

[3 : 39] 12 Corinthians 12 verse 27. Now faith makes us family and faith brings us unity. There's a togetherness. In Acts 2 verse 44 it says, And all that believed were together and had all things common.

11 Corinthians 12 verse 27. And faith brings us together, doesn't it? 11 Corinthians 12 verse 27. As brothers and sisters. 12 Corinthians 12 verse 27. Faith brings us harmony, that unity of fellowship. 12 Corinthians 12 verse 27. There's a wonderful harmony that is meant to be the church of God. 12 Corinthians 12 verse 28. As a great orchestra, as some great symphony, where there's several musical instruments playing together in one accord, in harmony. 12 Corinthians 12 verse 28. And this is like the unity that God wants for His community, His church.

13 Corinthians 12 verse 28. Imagine what it would be like to hear a music concert where some parts of the orchestra play whatever appeals to them at the time. 14 Corinthians 12 verse 28. You know the violinist over here, he plays a different tune from the pianist over here.

14 Corinthians 12 verse 29. What would that be like? 15 Corinthians 12 verse 29. It's not unity. 15 Corinthians 12 verse 29. What about some who might be playing on a footy field, some footy team, where some of the team decide to use different tactics from what the coach has trained the team to use, or some don't follow the team captain's game plan.

[4 : 54] What about down at a factory, if some of the process workers chose to rearrange some of the parts on the assembly line and just change things around to suit themselves every so often?

You know, disunity brings disaster. But God's plan is a oneness. God wants his church to have a oneness, a participation, a cooperation, to have a prayerful unity and to be a spiritual team. It takes a working together, a praying together. It says all that believed were together. What we believe counts. And faith joins us. Faith creates a bond.

Colossians 2 verse 2, it talks about God's people being knit together in love. What a picture that is, that we should be such a body, a close-knit body of believers.

And the body is described, likened to a physical body, that all the parts are fitly joined together. This phrase illustrates that unity that exists for the strengthening of the body.

[5 : 54] It's like putting jigsaw pieces together. When the right pieces get together, it takes shape. And so too for the church, the community of God. God says, Colossians 3 verse 14, Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Love ties everything together. That bond, that unity, that binding together. And it's the bond of perfection, it says. Ephesians 4 verse 3 tells of endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The spiritual fellowship of God's people is a beautiful oneness. But we know there's things that can stop that kind of unity. There's various barriers. Barriers of misunderstanding, murmuring, complaining, backbiting.

It's truly said that words can eat like a cancer. There's discord, there's division. Let's avoid that. Philippians 2 verse 2, Paul tells the Philippians, he says, Fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let's aim for that, that wonderful one accord, to be fitted together in that wonderful harmony, as a symphony would play together, as a football team would be working together with the same goal, joined together, bonded together, welded together, together, knit together, one in Christ.

[7 : 19] And this unity is the unity that is by faith. It's by Christ. It's Christ-centred unity. So God's community is about being a family of faith. It's about enjoying a unity of the faith.

And God's desire for us is that we aspire to that, to that maturity of faith. Maturity is another feature. Ephesians 4 verse 15 through 16, Paul says, But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

And so friends, to recap here, God wants his church, his community, to be family, the family of faith, but not a squabbling, dysfunctional kind of family, a cohesive one.

God wants his church to be in unity, not some unity of some ecumenical mishmash, some smorgasbord, some flim-flam, but a unity that is the unity of the faith, to be a united force, and to have a maturity, the maturity of faith.

He wants us to grow up, to be no more children, to increase and mature. God's church is meant to be a dynamic force, strong, resilient, and healthy.

[8 : 48] God helping us, let's be this church, a church with this kind of maturity, a church where we can exhort one another, encourage one another, edify one another, build each other up.

