

Built By the Lord

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Philemon 1:1-3

Chapter 21

Just Like Family

- I. Not a Country Club
 - A. Why did you choose this congregation?
 - B. Sadly, most people choose churches like they are shopping country clubs.
 - C. Congregations of the church are different.
 - 1. The congregation is a community of like-minded people who have agreed to assemble regularly, working together for a common purpose, under a common leadership, using a common treasury. See: Acts 4:32-35
 - 2. Best description of the church? → Brotherhood, 1 Peter 2:17.
 - D. One of the biggest decisions your family must make is which local congregation you will make part of your family.
- II. Blood is Thicker than Water?
 - A. Matthew 12:46-50 – Look at Jesus' statement.
 - 1. Jesus viewed His family as those who submitted to His heavenly Father, not those who were related to His earthly father.
 - 2. Jesus expected us to see the same relationship.
 - B. Mark 10:29-30
 - 1. Jesus recognized that becoming a part of His family might cause trouble in our earthly families, Matthew 10:35-36.
 - 2. Jesus pointed out that even though we might think that everyone would be happy for us to be more Christlike, being a Christian will often turn our earthly families against us.
 - 3. However, we gain a greater family, a family that, when working properly, will stand closer to us than our blood family.
 - C. When we Christians are behaving like Christ, the waters of baptism are thicker than the blood of family.
- III. Treated Like Family
 - A. Hopefully, your blood family has been happy with your decision to be a Christian and even joined you in it. If so, you are doubly blessed.
 - B. If not, the brethren in the local congregation are now a part of your extended family. Your family ought to treat them that way.
 - C. 1 Timothy 5:1-2 – Paul talked about the way we treat others in the church.
 - D. Sadly, with as much family mistreatment as occurs today, we may lose the meaning of this verse.
 - 1. Paul was not saying that everyone ought to treat the brethren the way they treat their family. For some people, that would be dreadful.
 - 2. Paul was saying we ought to treat our brethren in the same positive way we

are supposed to treat our family.

3. Ephesians 6:1-2; Leviticus 19:32

E. How should we treat our spiritual family?

1. Those who are younger should be treated with love and kindness as we would treat our brothers and sisters.
2. Hebrews 13:2 → Love the brethren
3. 1 Peter 3:8 → Harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit
4. Ephesians 4:31-32 → Kind and forgiving
5. Younger brothers and sisters → Always, there is the idea of being extremely protective of them. Remember Paul's relationship with Titus and Timothy. See: 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 3 John 1:4

F. In the local congregation, we understand that everyone is a different age, physically and spiritually.

IV. Dysfunctional Families

- A. Ideally, our physical family is a working unit of the larger spiritual family.
- B. Dysfunctional families receive a lot of press and attention in today's world.
 1. Sadly, sometimes a church family can also be dysfunctional.
 2. What makes a church family dysfunctional? When families like ours don't take an active part in the congregation.
 3. 1 Corinthians 12 speaks about the universal church. However, the principle and application is that the local church is made up of different parts that all function differently.
- C. What can I do? Paul wrote that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. See v. 22. Note v. 18 → You and your family are where you are because God knows you can provide something to His body there. Are you doing what God knows you can?

V. Your Family Needs God's Family

- A. The author gives the illustration of a man that felt he didn't need the local church. He felt that he could be spiritual on his own. The elder takes a glowing ember that was separated from the fire. It soon dies out. Then he places it back in the fire and soon glowed bright orange-red again. The wayward man easily saw the point of this illustration.
- B. God did not command us to attend the assemblies of the local congregation to be a burden to us. He did it to help. See: Hebrews 10:25
- C. Too many families decide they don't need the local church.
 1. God has made us to be together, to encourage and push one another.
 2. You and your family need the local church to stimulate you to love and good deeds, Hebrews 10:24.
 3. Make sure you are always an active part of a local church family.

VI. Today's Response

- A. Write out the reasons you work with the congregation of which you are a part.
- B. How important is the local church to you and your family?
- C. How important are you and your family to the local church?