

The Measure of His Church

Walking In His Image

Lesson 9: Measuring Our Commitment To Our Church Family Part 1

Text: 1Thessalonians 2:11-12; Acts 2:45-47

Introduction

1. What would be a good reason for a person to agree to have a Bible study with you? _____
2. We will attempt together in this lesson, to study how the metaphor of the family unit describes the local church in a particular area.

I. **A Theology of the Church – A Theology of the Family**

A. Writers of the New Testament often spoke of the church as a family unit.

1. They were writing to local church members, and also to family households.

a. **Ephesians 5:21-33**

b. **Colossians 3:18-25**

c. **Ephesians 6:1-4**

2. We must remember that several local churches began as individual households and then multiplied into multi-family units.

B. **The Household Metaphor**

1. Several New Testament writers used a variety of metaphors to describe the local church of Jesus Christ . . . family unit.

a. **Galatians 6:10** – household of faith

b. **Ephesians 2:19** – household of God (member of)

c. **1Timothy 3:15** – household of God

d. **1Peter 4:17** – house of God

2. Members of God's family are called **brothers** (and sisters) "**in Christ**" and **God** is identified as our heavenly Father and the **Holy Spirit** is identified as our helper.

3. The family metaphor is used to illustrate the church . . . the extension of a family model.

a. The family unit was God's original plan and design to be a reflection of the Lord Himself. **Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-23**

b. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God – distorted what God had in mind; Sin entered into the picture.

(1) What did their disobedience give birth to? _____

(2) Because of sin, what do we see happening to families today?

c. Did God have a plan for restoration by His grace?

(1) When and where did this plan start, and with what person?

(2) Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3

(3) Eventually, Jesus gave birth to His own unique family – His church and kingdom.

(a) **Acts 2; 10:34-43; 17:22-31**

(b) **Revelation 19:7; Ephesians 2:11-22; 5:25-26**

4. Human history then began with the family, which became the foundational institution for all societies.

II. **The Family Unit in the New Testament World**

A. In the Jewish culture, the importance of the family unit was a key to the overall growth of the local church.

1. Whole families were converted to Jesus Christ.

2. **Acts 4:4**

3. Did this also happen in Gentile households?

B. **Specific examples:**

1. **Acts 10:1-48; 11:14-15; 18:22**

2. **Acts 16:15**

3. **Acts 16:29-33**

4. Other examples: **Acts 18:8; 1Corinthians 1:16; Philemon**

C. There is no question that household evangelism happened in the first century.

1. It is a known fact that family structure was very important in the New Testament world. Why?

2. How did this strong family structure become an important key in helping the New Testament church mature in Christ?

3. Is it time that "strong families" build strong and mature church families locally?