

You were Formed for God's Family

"...I am writing these things to you...[so] you will know how to live in the family of God. That family is the church of the living God...." 1 Timothy 3:14,15 (NCV)

I. FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR FELLOWSHIP

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." Romans 12:9-16 (NIV)

1. The first building block for fellowship is _____. (v. 9)
"...the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are." Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)
2. The second building block for fellowship is _____. (v. 10)
"Believers shouldn't curse anyone or be quarrelsome, but they should be gentle and show courtesy to everyone." Titus 3:2 (GW)
3. The third building block for fellowship is _____. (v. 12)
"If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble." Ecclesiastes 4:10 (NLT)
 - ❖ Mutual _____ .
 - ❖ Mutual _____ .
 - ❖ Mutual _____ .
4. The fourth building block for fellowship is _____. (v. 13)
"They worshipped together regularly at the temple each day, (daily) met in small groups in homes for communion, and shared their meals with great joy...." Acts 2:46 (TLB)
5. The fifth building block for fellowship is _____. (v. 16)
"Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church...be of one mind, united in thought and purpose." 1 Corinthians 1:10 (NLT)

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” James 4:6b (NIV)

We desire a place where we are able to share our true feelings (authenticity); differences are respected (courtesy); we are encouraged to grow spiritually (mutuality); we spend time with people, getting to know them (hospitality); and we are supported in our purpose and are accepted, despite our weaknesses (unity).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Christian life involves more than believing; it also involves belonging. God wants you to be a part of His family to build relationships that are deep, satisfying, meaningful fellowship with others.

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:14,15. In the Bible, the church is described as a family. What characteristics of healthy families would be true of healthy churches or groups?
2. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 4:10, “If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble.” Can you share a time in your life when other believers came to your assistance, brought you comfort, or met a need?
3. In this session you learned about five building blocks for true fellowship. Which of these is a strength of your group or your church? Which one do you personally find most challenging?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 3:13, and Hebrews 10:25. From these verses, what are some of the practical benefits of encouragement? Who has served as a source of encouragement in your life?

SERVE/SHARE

This week's lesson explained the value of mutual accountability. It is suggested that you get a spiritual partner in your group. If you already have a partner for reading *The Purpose Driven Life*, this person could become your spiritual partner as well.

Call or meet this week with your spiritual partner to pray for each other and encourage one another in your spiritual growth.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

True meaningful fellowship with God's people begins in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We must know Him first and then learn how He wants us to relate to other believers. The Scripture tells us about this important aspect of our Christian life.

1. In Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37 we see examples of the true fellowship of the early church. What principles can we learn from these verses?
2. What are some things that can prevent true fellowship from happening in your life, small group, or church?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10. What does it mean to be of "one mind"? What is the distinction between unity and uniformity?
4. Read James 4:6. In your opinion, why is pride spoken against so harshly?
5. What explanation does John give us about our responsibility to love our fellow believers in 1 John 3:14-18?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME

1. Continue to follow the Reading Plan.
2. Read, reflect, and meditate on Romans 8:28-38 this week.
3. Read John 15:1-8. What lessons can we learn about our spiritual growth from this passage? When have you felt most connected to the vine?
4. Work on the memory verses and review them with your spiritual partner.