

GOD'S FAMILY

When we were saved we became a part of a great family. The family of God. Ephesians 3:15 *"From whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name."* Because of God's salvation He is not only our Creator but also our Father. We are related to one another by Jesus' blood. Ephesians 1:7. *"In him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."* God wants His family united together to do His work. He has a particular structure into which He fits His children, that is His Body called the church. Ephesians 1:22. *"And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church."* Also read Ephesians 3:10; 3:21; 5:21-32.

GOD'S UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Jesus Christ is the head of the church throughout the earth Isaiah 2:2-4. *"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."* His purpose is to have a church that will shine like a bright light in this dying world. Matthew 5:14. *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."* The church is a nation within the nations, and although the world would like to stop it, the church will grow more powerful and more perfect until Jesus comes. Ephesians 5:27. *"And to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."* We have an exciting future as members of God's great family. Also read, Numbers 14:21; Isaiah 40:5.

GOD'S LOCAL CHURCH

Each of us has a role in our local church which God has ordained for us. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. All over the world God is pouring out His Spirit on His people in a new way Acts 2:17-21 *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* You can be a part of God's work from within your local church, bringing light to your local community.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN FIT IN.

1. Find a local church that is preaching the Word and is open to the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; God will help you make this decision as you seek His guidance about it. 1 Corinthians 12:18. *"But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be."* Once He has shown you which church to join, become committed to that church and loyal to the people. They are your spiritual family now, you should meet with them regularly. Hebrews 10:24 & 25. *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*
2. Submit to the authority in your local church; God has given each church elders who feed and protect the people of God. They are there to protect you and to help you grow in your relationship with God and His people. Feel free to seek their help or counsel at any time. Hebrews 13:17. *"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you*

as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

3. Develop good friendships with people in the church. Participate together with them in activities that you will enjoy and in some that will challenge you. ie: Bushwalking, camping, eating out, witnessing, visiting hospitals, etc.
4. God has given you special gifts and abilities, look for opportunities to use them in the church or in the community. This is how you help to build the Body of Christ into a glorious church. Romans 12:6-8; *"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."* Also read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 27-31.
5. Some things all of us can do to help support our local church are: Praying for each other, especially our leaders. Acts 2:46. *"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts."* Giving the church our financial support in tithes and offerings, Proverbs 3:9. *"Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops."* Malachi 3:10. *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."* Luke 11:42. *"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone."* God has ways of bringing blessings upon people who trust Him that the world doesn't understand.
6. Listen to the messages being preached from the pulpit and prayerfully apply them to your life. God will speak to you through His ministers, His prophets, His people, His Word, and sometimes directly into your spirit. When you hear God speak, no matter how you hear His voice, apply what you hear into your life and it will bring health and new life to you. Read Proverbs 2:1-22; 3:1-18.

Keys to building a church with life and power are found in Acts 2:42. *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."* The Apostle's teaching and fellowship are recorded for us in the pages of the New Testament. In order to follow their example we must read about them in the Bible, and find other believers who reflect such values and imitate them.

Unfortunately history also shows that religion has sometimes caused division in the church. God, the Head of the church desires the church to come to complete unity here on earth. Jesus prayed *"Father, I pray that they may be one just as you and I are one."* (John 17:20). When the church truly is one, then we will see many of those outside the church enquiring as to what it is that brings such unity in a world at war with itself. God desires to draw us together, into His church and His church into Himself. When the Body of Christ is united then we can expect to see greater power released to the church than we can imagine.

Write out and memorise Psalm 122:1.

FELLOWSHIP

1. Because God's love for us is so great, what does He now call us? 1 John 3:1

2. If every Christian is one of God's children, what should be our attitude to other Christians?
Hebrews 13:1

3. As members of God's family what should we help each other to do? Hebrews 10:24

4. What must we make sure we don't give up? Hebrews 10:25.

5. Who is with us when we meet together? Matthew 18:20.

6. What did both Jesus and the Apostle Paul desire the church to have? John 17:20-23; Romans 15:5-6.

7. What happens when you hear the Word of God taught? Romans 10:17

8. What is the right attitude to have when you enter the House of God? Psalms 122:1

9. What four things did the early believers do together regularly? Acts 2:42

COMMUNION

10. What did Jesus ask His followers to do to remember Him? Luke 22:19-20

11. What is the significance of Communion? 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

CHURCH STRUCTURE - LEADERSHIP

12. 1 Corinthians 12:27 says the church is the _____ of _____.

13. Colossians 1:18 says Jesus is the _____ of the _____, the church.

14. What is the job of the leadership of the Church? Who gives them that responsibility?
Ephesians 4:11-13.

15. What is the proper attitude for you to have toward all spiritual leaders over you in the Lord? 1
Thessalonians 5:12-13.

16. How should we honour elders? 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

17. What happens if an elder falls into sin? 1 Timothy 5:19-20

18. What will leaders do for you and the rest of the people of God? Jeremiah 3:15.

19. What does James 5:14 say we should do if we are sick?

CHURCH STRUCTURE - SMALL GROUPS

20. Hebrews 10:25 and 1 Corinthians 14:26.
 - a. What do you think are the advantages of meeting together during the week in homes (small groups)?

 - b. What are the advantages of meeting in larger groups?

21. List some of the ways God can use you to help build up the body of Christ (the church): 1
Corinthians 12:27-28

GIVING

22. What is the Tithe, and what is it used for? Genesis 14:20; Nehemiah 12:44; 1 Corinthians 9:11-14.

23. What does God promise us if we trust him with our finances? Malachi 3:10-12.

24. What should our attitude be toward giving, and how should we go about our giving?
2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Matthew 6:1-4; Matthew 23:23.

What is the most important truth you have learned today?

Write any questions or comments about any area of interest you would like to discuss.