

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Church as Family”

John 1:12-13

Sermon Series Title: “The Church of God”

Sermon Series Summary: The Church of God is the people of God throughout the ages, redeemed by Jesus Christ. We’re going to take a look at who we are and who we are called to be as the church of God. More specifically, we see that who we are is directly connected to whose we are in Christ.

Passage Setting: We’ve seen the church as building, city, and body. Last week, we looked at both the organization and the organism of the church. This week, we will look at the church as family. We see this throughout the New Testament. God is our Father, and Jesus is our Elder Brother. He has brought us into the family of God, making us brothers and sisters in Him.

Summary: As we’ve looked at Church as Building, City, and Body, we are looking at Church as Family this week. In our salvation, God is our Father, and we are His sons, making us a spiritual and eternal family. We are called to love one another in this way. We are able to be the family of God, because we are united to Jesus, the Son of God.

Central Truth: “Let us be the family of God in Christ.”

Sermon Points:

1. Our Faith
2. Our Family
3. Our Fellowship
4. Our Foundation

Opening Question

1. What do you think about when you think of family?

(Answers may vary.)

Whether positive or negative, most of these associations regarding family can be applied to the church. We’ll take a look at this topic through our passages this week.

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Read John 1:12-13 and Galatians 4:6-7.

2. What are the ways we live as a slave instead of a child of God? What does it mean for us to live as a child of God?

(Answers may vary.)

From Jack Miller's Sonship:

The Orphan

I will not leave you as orphans...
(John 14:18)

- Feels alone. Lacks a vital daily intimacy with God. Is full of self-concern.
- Anxious over felt needs: relationships, money, health. "I'm all alone and nobody cares. I'm not a happy camper."
- Lives on a succeed/fail basis. Needs to "look good" and "be right." Is performance-oriented.
- Feels condemned, guilty, and unworthy before God and others.
- Has little faith, lots of fear, lots of faith in himself: "I've got to fix it."

The Child of God

But he has given us the Spirit of sonship and by him we cry, 'Abba, Father!'
(Rom 8:15)

- Has a growing assurance that "God is really *my* loving heavenly Father."
- Trusts the Father and has a growing confidence in his loving care. Is being freed up from worry.
- Learning to live in daily, conscious, partnership with God. Is not fearful.
- Feels loved, forgiven, and totally accepted because Christ's merit really clothes him.
- Has a daily *working trust* in God's sovereign plan for her life as loving, wise, and best. Believes God is good.

Read Ephesians 2:19, Matthew 26:46-50, and John 19:26-27.

3. Do we see the church as a family? Why or why not?

(Answers may vary.)

These passages show us we belong to the family of God. Our citizenship points to our rights, but our household points to our belonging. In Matthew 12, we see the priority of Jesus' disciples over His own biological family. And we are united by our relationship with our Heavenly Father. John 19 shows us that we take care of one another as a family.)

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2, Romans 12:10, Galatians 6:10, 2 Corinthians 13:11.

4. What does it mean for us to treat one another as family members?

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(Answers will vary.)

We must treat one another with respect and love. We love with the affection of Christ with a “holy kiss.” And this “holy kiss” is not just for our friends but for everyone in the family. We outdo one another in showing honor. We make sure we take care of everyone, especially our church family. Lastly, we are called to rejoice and live in peace with one another.

Just like every earthly family, there is dysfunction in our local church families. We will be hurt by one another. We will experience betrayal, abandonment, and pain in our churches. But at the same time, we are able to experience hope, comfort, peace, strength, and grace through our church family. We are able to experience relationships that are deeper and richer than other earthly relationships. We are able to forgive with the forgiveness of Christ and see reconciliation that mirrors our reconciliation in our Savior.)

Final Thoughts: *Just like every family has dysfunction, our churches have dysfunction as well. But it does not disqualify God’s call over our churches: we are a family in Christ. His blood runs through our hearts and bonds us together forever. This affects how we treat and see one another. We are able to be this family of Christ, because Jesus, our Elder Brother, saved us and brought us into His household. He was not ashamed of us, but instead, He took on our shame, humiliation, injustice, and abandonment for sin. In this way, we are able to be part of His family forever.*