

# The Family of God

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). Jesus told His followers that God has given them His kingdom. This kingdom, whose head is Jesus Christ, has always been on this earth, and still is. Those who endeavor as God’s children, wherever their geographical home may be, live in His kingdom and are members of the family of God. Since all members of this family are united by God’s Holy Spirit and believe their sins forgiven in Jesus’ name and blood, they are united in love, are very close to each other, and are dependent on one another. This bond of unity and love is much stronger than the bond uniting natural families together, since God’s love joins us. We thank God for His family and for the gift of being a part of this family.

## **The Believing Family, the Family of God**

We also thank God for our natural family. It is a gift from Him. When the parents and children of a family are believers, this is a special gift. We often forget to be sufficiently thankful for this gift. Our believing family, our small home congregation, is a miniature version of God’s larger family, as Jesus lives there through His Spirit. However, we still need the larger family of God. God has given its members as our companions, escorts on the way to heaven.

Jesus comforts those whose natural family members are not of God’s family. They, too, are blessed with brothers and sisters in faith in God’s kingdom. Jesus says, “Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29,30). Here Jesus so beautifully and powerfully shows the blessings and benefits of being in God’s family. We enjoy this love, unity, and fellowship with other believers, which will also continue eternally in heaven.

## **Gather with God’s Children**

We need the larger family of God. God’s children gather to hear His Word, and in this fellowship, we learn of God, Jesus and His kingdom, and are assured through the gospel of the forgiveness of sins. As parents of a believing family, it is important that we take our children to services and to other events in our congregations. It is important that they understand that gathering with God’s children is the first priority in our lives. They understand this if, no matter how busy or tired we are, we still take the time to gather with God’s children. If we frequently put other matters before services, children also get used to this and can consider this to be an acceptable pattern of behavior.

It is also important that we take our families to visit other believers. Our lives are often so busy that we begin to neglect this necessary fellowship. It seems strange that in our modern world, with all of its conveniences, we have become so busy that it is hard to find time to visit. We should consider what role other activities and modern technology have in this. Perhaps we need to return to the simple example learned from our parents and grandparents. It seems that even though many of them really worked hard and did not have many of the conveniences that we take for granted, they still often took the time to take their families to visit others.

I fondly remember the visiting I did with my family when I was a child. I did not only visit families with children the same age as I was, but we often all went together to visit older people whose children had long before grown up and left the home. I remember how interesting and comforting it was to listen to the conversations between my parents and these elders. We learn so much from others’ gifts and wisdom of life.

Modern technology allows us to stay connected with other believers in other congregations, even in other parts of the world. This can be a good thing, but we have to be careful that it doesn’t become only superficial, and that it doesn’t begin to take the place of actual personal fellowship with the believers we can easily and frequently gather with.

## **God’s Family—Escorts in Faith**

We are reminded how essential God’s family is to us. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). Our escorts in faith help us in so many ways. We can share our joys, trials, sorrows, and temptations with them; we get advice and guidance from them. Most importantly, we can comfort each other with the gospel.

We are also reminded how important the fellowship of God’s family is. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves -to--gether, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25). As we are closer to our eternal reward than ever before, we are also closer to that day when Jesus comes to take all believers from the beginning of time to that day to eternal life in heaven. At this time, as always, we need the fellowship of God’s children. Let us continue to gather around God’s Word, traveling together to our eternal reward.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. How is the family of God important to me personally?
2. How can we ensure that our family considers gathering with other believers a priority?
3. How can modern technology be both a benefit and a hindrance in our connections with other believers?
4. What things in our lives hinder us from fellowship with other believers? What can we do about these things?
5. What are the blessings and benefits that I have experienced through fellow--ship with other believers? What special memories do I have of these times?

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