

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021 • LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE •



Why Church?

Rediscovering the
Meaning and Mission
of God's People





Why Church?

FAMILY BY BLOOD

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Family by Blood

- Colton Conrad

The Church is the family of God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Col. 1:1-14

Brothers and Sisters

“No one called someone a brother or sister who wasn’t a blood relative. In fact, the entire perspective on family in that culture was dramatically different than ours.”

- Lee Eclov

33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

- Mark 3:31-35

“...Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel.

30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life...”

-Mark 10:28-30

Family by Blood:

What brings us together?

We are reconciled, brought together, made right with God, and welcomed into His family, by the blood of Jesus.

“Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this...We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.



21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit”
-Ephesians 2:19-22

Our identity in Christ – our salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ, is a beautiful reality, and it creates, in this family, a gospel culture.

Thankful Recipients who Delight in the Church

The Church is not an ideal, but a reality, and so the way in which we enter that reality makes all the difference.

Bonhoeffer: Someone who loves their dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the Christian community, even if their intentions are honest and earnest and sacrificial.

Jesus delights in His Church “God keeps the planet in motion because He has not finished the work of the church, that is building the Kingdom of His Son. Since this is God’s purpose, it out to be ours. And if we’ll see it for what it is, we will delight in it (just as God does.)”

– Donald Whitney

“Now suppose that the very Spirit of Jesus Christ himself were given to dwell, not only in the body of Jesus but also in another human.



(And realize that according to the New Testament, this is what happens to all who belong to Christ – see Romans 8:9) Obviously then, like Christ, the man or woman who has been given the Spirit of Jesus would love what Jesus loves and died for – His bride, the church...”

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Welcome (Accept) and Inheritance

“Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” (Romans 15:7, ESV)

“We can be weak, we can be honest with ourselves, with one another, and with the Lord, and he says, “We belong.” Welcome. So to all who are weary and need rest. To all who mourn and long for comfort...to all who fail and desire strength...to all who sin and need a Savior...this church opens wide her red doors in the name of Jesus, the friend of sinners. Welcome. I’m glad you’re here.”

– Ray Ortlund, Immanuel Nashville

Do you welcome and encourage one another? Or do you feel stressed out or feel like you are hiding when you gather with your community?

Care, Love, and Commitment

Some of the ways God calls us to actively care and love one another:

- Honor one another above yourselves. (Rom 12:10)
- Love one another just as Christ has loved us (John 12:34)
- Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Forgiving each other (Eph. 4:32)
- In humility counting each other more significant than yourselves." (Phil. 2:3)
- Encourage one another. (1 Thess. 4:18)
- Always strive to do good to one another (5:15)
- Outdo one another in showing honor (Rom. 12:10)
- Consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24)
- Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another... (James 5:16)
- Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:9)...

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.... all have been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body..."

But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." 25 "This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

- 1 Corinthians 12:18-26, NLT

What's in heaven's history book? "The names of the mighty and well-known people of today would be merely footnotes, but "the names of those who loved the Lord and ministered to His saint will fill its pages."

- Donald Whitney



Summit Drive Church Covenant

So, what dishes have you been skipping out on? Consider today those in your life who didn't skip the dishes and whose impact has brought you into the family of God. Where is God calling you to participate in the family? How is God calling you to consider others, bear their burdens, or honor them above yourselves? How can you gather with other believers and encourage them and be encouraged?



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. On a Sunday, do you think of yourself as being there to contribute to and build up others in your congregation? How could you do this more? (Adapted from Love Your Church by Tony Merida)
2. In what ways is your church strong at welcoming outsiders? Where could it improve? (Adapted from Love Your Church by Tony Merida)
3. Ray Ortlund (whose Welcome Pastor Colton referred to in his message) and Sam Allberry point out how our understanding of the gospel (our gospel doctrine), creates a gospel culture. They say that knowing how we enter into fellowship together should profoundly shape the culture of our church. In what ways does Christ's sacrifice for us set the tone for our fellowship together?
4. Pastor Colton offered a brief list of some of the ways we are called to love and care for one another in the church. Go through the list and discuss what this would practically look like to be engaged in: a) on a Sunday morning, and b) throughout the week.
5. Do you view your church community as a place where you can exhale after a long hard week and enjoy the community (or rather, family!) with honesty and trust and genuine affection or is coming to church a place where you feel like you have to put your best foot forward, and grin your way through while you are actually stressed out and wanting to crawl into a cave. Why or why not?