

INSIGHT

When you became a Christian, you became a child of God; a member of His family. Our wise and loving Father knows how much we need close association with those who share the same faith. This fellowship is provided in the church, which is the body of Christ (*Ephesians 1:22-23*).

One of the most important things a disciple can do is to develop relationships with other disciples within the church. We ought to take the initiative in getting acquainted with members of the body of Christ, for they all are our spiritual brothers and sisters. Paul said in *Ephesians 2:19*, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.” As we can see from this passage, the church of Christ is compared to a city, and every converted sinner is a resident of it. It is also compared to a house, and every converted sinner is one of the family, a servant and a child in God’s house. Is there a greater honor or happiness than this? For this reason, we ought to get to know one another, love one another and fellowship with one another.

As Christians, we understand the importance of having a vertical relationship, that is, a relationship with God. But God has called us not only to have a relationship with Him, but to have a relationship with all people, especially with those of His household. For Christ said, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*” *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.*” He also said, “*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*” Love must be both “vertical” and “horizontal”. See the picture--of the Cross?

The Body Of Christ Relationships In The Body

Key Text: **1 Peter 4:8**

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Theme:

When we enter into the Body of Christ (the Church), relationships are radically transformed! Instead of having ourselves as our focus, we must consider others as better than ourselves (*Philippians 2:3*). Church is not just something we attend, it is an opportunity to tend to the needs of others. God gave us the Church to have spiritual relationships. He knows that we need each other.

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. Make it a point to call and write to other Christians in order to build relationships. Set specific goals in this area.
2. Pray for each other daily.
3. Establish a prayer covenant with a brother/sister. Brothers pray with brothers; sisters pray with sisters.
4. Introduce yourself to at least one new person in each service.
5. Write notes or cards of encouragement to your brothers and sisters. Write also to your leaders in the congregation to encourage them.
6. Invite members to your home and accept their invitations to visit them.

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE	SMALL GROUP STUDY
<p>Relationships In The Body</p> <p>I. Adopted Children</p> <p>A. Through faith in Christ</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>John 1:12</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Right to become children of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Receiving Him as a gift from God --Receiving His teaching as truth --His grace and love as motivation for our actions --Adopted upon baptism (<i>Gal. 3:26,27</i>) 2. <i>1 John 3:1</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How great is His love that we should be called His children!!! 3. <i>Hebrews 2:11</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Jesus calls us His brothers <p>II. A New Commandment: John 13:34-35</p> <p>A. A fundamental law of the kingdom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is commanded 2. Christ as example--this is our motive 3. The distinguishing mark of Christ <p>B. Action-orientated relationship</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "<i>As I have loved you</i>" 2. Love is something you do <p>C. Love through Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>1 Cor. 14:3</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>laleo</i>--to speak, utter, tell b. strengthen, encourage, comfort 2. <i>Ephesians 4:29</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Speak what is helpful to others needs b. Speak what is beneficial <p>III. Conclusion</p> <p><i>Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.</i></p>	<p>Warm-up: How do you feel about hypocrisy?</p> <p>See To It <i>1 Cor. 13:-1-4</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From this passage, list the "gifts" that are in question here. 2. What made these glorious gifts unacceptable before God? Explain your answer. 3. How does this apply to people professing to be Christians today? Explain your answer. 4. Read <i>1 John 4:7-12</i>. Why is <i>love</i> such an important factor in a Christian's life? 5. How do verses 9 through 10 motivate the true disciple of Christ to love? Explain how these verses help us to love unconditionally. <p>Seeing It Closer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you find yourself "forced" to do good or "motivated" to do good? Explain. 2. On a scale of 1 to 5 (one being the least open and five being the most open), how open are you towards correction? 3. Does <i>love</i> always "feel" good? How is being corrected synonymous to being loved? 4. Read <i>Galatians 2:11-14</i>. Did Paul love Peter? How did you think Peter reacted to Paul's reproof? 5. What specific things can you do to show the love of God within you? <p>Getting To It: Starting from <i>1 Corinthians 13 verse 4</i> to the first part of verse 8, go around the room and have each member of the class read one quality of love, substituting the word "<i>love</i>" or "<i>it</i>" with their name.</p>