

## THE FAMILY OF GOD

A favorite word for many of us is the word “family.” It conveys feelings of acceptance and loving relationships. Our most precious memories should be those spent as children with loving parents, and in adult life, with spouse and our children. Many of us cherish memories of family get-togethers with our kinfolk. As God intended it, family should bring memories of security, acceptance and interdependence. When it is otherwise, there are serious problems that need to be resolved.

The church is depicted in many terms in Scripture, but some of the most commonly used speak of family. Jesus taught His followers to pray, “Our Father” (Matthew 6:9), and spoke of those that do the Father’s will as “my brother, sister, and mother” (Matthew 12:50). This close, spiritual relationship is to be sought and nurtured in the church.

Wouldn’t it be great if it could be said of every family, “They are such a loving family”? Sad to say, this is not always the case. Too frequently homes are broken up by abuse, neglect, unfaithfulness, etc.

There is a family, however, that should always be a haven of love, and that is God’s family, the church. The church was born out of love. Ephesians 5:25 reads, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” The church should be as an oasis of love in a desert of hate. Jesus told His disciples, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). We are urged in Scripture to “Let brotherly love continue” (Hebrews 13:1). Without love in God’s family, how would one know it was His family? Truly, love is the cement that holds us together.

Are you part of this family? Paul defined this relationship clearly in Galatians 3:26-27: “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” --Ron