

## The Family of God

God's plan has always been to repair the damage of sin through a family of all nations that He would form. This family originated with Abraham's descendants who became the nation of Israel whom God referred to in family language as His "son". Israel was called to show case Godly living to the nations around them to attract them to God but they largely failed in their vocation. God sent Jesus as His Son (= His true family) to achieve what Israel couldn't, namely to live in obedience to God and draw people from all nations to Him. We become children of God when we enter into the life of Jesus, the true Son or family of God. We are then called to live as an obedient, loving community of all nations with the same purpose to draw people to God.

### Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-7

- Make a list of God's promises to Abraham.
- How would you summarise God's purpose for Abraham and his descendants?

### Exodus 4:21-23; Isaiah 49:6

- What family language does God use to describe His people, Israel?
- What did God expect Israel to do as "a light to the Gentiles"?

### John 8:12-13

- Jesus claimed to be the light of the world in a group of very religious Jews.
- Why do you think they got upset and challenged him when he made this claim?

### Mark 3:31-35

- What according to Jesus, does it take to be a true member of his family?
- Applying this principle, does being a member of a church guarantee we are in God's family?

### 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 1 Timothy 3:15

- Do you think there is a difference between the body of Christ, the church and the family of God?
- How do these passages contradict people who believe they can live as Christians apart from a church?

### John 13:34-35

- What is the identifying mark of God's family? In what ways did Jesus love his disciples?
- What is God's ultimate purpose for wanting us to love one another in such a way?

### Ephesians 4:2-3,16,32

- Why do you think we are called to bear with one another in God's family?
- What is our natural reaction when we are hurt by someone? How should we respond to hurt in God's family?

### Acts 2:42-47

- The first Christians were acting like families behaved in those times – in regular fellowship, studying the scriptures together, praying together and eating together. Do you think church should be any different today?

### Hebrews 10:23-25

- Would you miss an important celebration of your physical family? Do you think meetings of your spiritual family should be any different?

*Reflection: How willing are you to make the family of God a priority? How would your relationships change if you lived in this way? How would your schedule change?*

#### FURTHER STUDY

**Romans 12:4-5.** What do you think it means to belong to one another? Is this a popular message in our individualistic society?

**Matthew 28:18-20.** We are called to make disciples of all nations. God's family should reflect the diversity of many cultures, languages and nations, united in Christ. What do you find inspiring about this? Challenging?