

THE CHURCH - THE FAMILY OF CHRIST

1 Timothy 3:14-15 Psalm 122:1

Introduction: Ever see in someone's kitchen a plaque hanging on a wall with the inscription: "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."? The "FAMILY" is supposed to be a place of security, caring, acceptance, oneness and fellowship - HOME.

Through a common, individual belief in Jesus Christ, the CHURCH is a FAMILY with God as the Father, with brothers and sisters and Jesus being the first born of that Family. If the Church is a Family, just what kind of place should it be?

I. THE CHURCH SHOULD BE A PLACE OF GLADNESS

1. The single most important characteristic of a good home is HAPPINESS!
2. Discipline, responsibility, respect, love, caring all equals HAPPINESS!
3. The Church is to be a place of laughter, joy, and HAPPINESS!
4. What do visitors feel or think of our Church Family?
5. Some Churches squabble, bicker, argue, complain and gripe all the time.
6. *Psalm 122:1 - "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the House of the Lord.'"*
7. What do people say about our "House of the Lord?"

II. THE CHURCH SHOULD BE A PLACE OF GROWTH

1. Some Church members are called "hypocrites." A "Hypocrite" originally meant an "actor."
In the Greek plays and dramas put on in theaters, the performers were called "hypocrites."
2. Not all who don't act "Christian" are hypocrites for many are at various stages of growing and maturing, as our children go through different growth stages, so do believers.
3. Every member is to be the older "brother or sister" to each other in growth. From the newborn Christian throughout life and until the Lord calls us home. We are to care for one another.
4. The Church Family is to nurture and help each other:
*John 13:34-35; Romans 12:5; 12:10-15; 1 Corinthians 12:26; Romans 12:16; 14:13
Romans 15:7; 15:14; 16:16; 1 Corinthians 11:33; 12:25; Galatians 5:13;
Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Ephesians 5:21; 4:2;
Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 4:10; 5:5; James 4:11; 5:9-16; 1 John 1:7; Galatians 6:2*
5. No single member has to be alone in the battles of life.

6. It's been said that "it takes a whole village to raise a child."

III. THE CHURCH SHOULD BE A PLACE OF GRACE

1. The Church becomes Home by a birth. It is not earned or deserved.
2. The Church is a place of hope, healing, acceptance and belonging.
3. If trouble comes to a member, the Church is the first place, the first people you want to know.
4. Some Churches are critical, judgmental instead of accepting, supporting, and caring.
5. The Church Family is to stay with it's members.

CONCLUSION:

1. Sooner or later everything we hold dear will be stripped away. Everything except your relationship with God will be gone.
2. The Church Family should always be a place of refuge - Your HOME.