

Life Group Discussion Guide

3.14.21

ONE Series

The Family of God

Matthew 12:46-50; 1 John 3:1

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God.”

OPEN

Had you realized before that the most frequently used metaphor for the church in your New Testament is *family*? Why do you think this is so?

NEXT

Readers are expected to sense a “shock value” when reading Matt 12:46-50. Why did Jesus handle the situation as he did? What does his statement to the crowd that day communicate about the importance of the church?

Not every person has had a positive experience in his or her nuclear family. Even so, most everyone gets the point that family is *supposed to be* a center of accepting, loving, nurturing behaviors for its members. How is 1 Cor 13:4-7 an ideal characterization of a church’s life?

Reflect on the following statement in light of Ephesians 5:21-33: “We must not think of ‘family’ in terms of comfort and security only. Families train children and challenge them to grow up to become productive adults. A ‘church family’ must be serious about growth, maturity, and life transformation for all its members.”

The church is a Christ-centered community of acceptance, accountability, and nurture where gradual spiritual transformation takes place over time. How do you react to this attempt at describing the church? Analyze the four key descriptors in the statement by defining each of them in your own words: acceptance, accountability, nurture, spiritual formation.

To be a child in God’s family is to have not only the *honor* of wearing his name but also the *responsibility* of bearing the family name honorably before a watching world. Read 1 Peter 1:16. (If you have time, trace some of the OT background to the “Be holy, for I am holy” motif.)

Read 1 John 3:1 aloud. Use the tone and inflection you sense John was trying to communicate in writing these words. How might one hear an “invitation” in the language of this beautiful verse?

CLOSING

Can you think of a family member at Harpeth Hills who needs the attention of comfort, encouragement, or challenge right now? How could you be the Father’s agent to meet that need in the coming week for one of your spiritual siblings?