

Living In Christ's Body-Community-Family

Key Bible Passages: Jn. 17; 1 Jn. 2:9-11, 3:1-24, 4:7-21; Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37, 5:42, 13:1-4, 16:4-5; Ro. 12:3-21; 1 Cor. 4:14-17, 9:2, 11:17-34, 12:1-14:40, 16:1-4, 16:15-24; 2 Cor. 6:11-13, 7:2-16, 8:11-24; Eph. 2:19-22, 4:7-16; Phil. 2:1-11; 1 Tim. 3:1-16

Christ in Christ's Body: 1 Cor. 12:12-31

1. Christ is the Head of a Body called the Church. Col. 1:18 Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, wants to have Himself on earth in "skin form".
2. The analogy of Christ's Body has many implications:
 - A. Each member is in such close proximity, so organically connected, that the "fluids" and "electrical" impulses can be transferred in an unbroken flow - The life force can be transmitted from cell to cell, limb to limb.
 - B. One member cannot live without the support and life of the other members. 1 Co.12-; Ro. 12:4
 - C. None of the members belong only to themselves. Each member belongs to the others. Ro. 12:4
 - D. The quality of connection determines the quality of life and ability to carry out purpose.
 - E. Covenant means to be knit or bound to something for the purpose of exchanging life. It is the highest word for love and unity. Covenant is connectedness at the highest level because being connected is a matter of life and death. All covenants are made in blood.
 - F. Sin is defined as "broken relationships", the severing of covenant. Sin is disconnected relationships. The by-product of sin, the fruit of sin, is negative behaviors like moral failure.
 - G. The early church family was connected at the 1. Mind (because they all were obtaining the mind of Christ), 2. Heart (spirit to spirit...soul to soul), 3. Lifestyle (shared resources, time, energy, goals, mission) Acts 4:32-35
3. God mediates his mercy and grace in large part through assigned people in our lives: parents, elders, apostles & prophets. Eph. 6:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-17, 5:5-7; Ro. 1:11; Heb. 12:14-15, 13:17
4. Living rightly connected to Christ's body enables the full release of God's mercy and grace. Not living righteously (in right relationship) connected to the body of Christ has serious negative consequences. 1 Cor. 11:27-34

Christ's Community:

1. Community – Greek word "koinonia" – means to have all things in common. Many times, the Greek word in the original New Testament is translated with the word "fellowship", which may not convey the depth of meaning. Acts 2:42-47
2. Communication is essential to communion. Communion is real "oneness" at a very deep relational level. High quality love!
3. True communion is the basis of community.
4. The Kingdom of God is all about the government of God. It is Christ's rule on earth. Christ's communities will have Christ's government in place.

Christ's Family:

1. God reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit. He is Three Persons, yet One God who dwells in covenantal unity as a Family of Three yet One. Dt. 1:31, 32:6; Ps 2:7, 6,68:5; Isa 9:6; Matt. 6:9-26, 11:27; Jn. 3:35; Ro. 8:15; 2 Cor. 6:18; Matt. 28:19
2. God must build His kingdom in a way consistent with who He is, a Father & Son in Family. Therefore, God builds His kingdom relationally in Family- Natural & Spiritual.
3. Spiritual family is actually more eternally significant than natural family. This is good news for many who are born into broken natural families. Jn. 1:10-13; Matt. 10:35-39, 12:48; Eph. 3:14-21
4. Christ enables us to connect with Father. Christ keeps on revealing the Father to the sons of God in Family. Jn. 17:25-27

5. When God has a big purpose, He appoints and delegates responsibility to “fathers”. It is only loving, fatherly-motherly, servant-leaders who reveal Father’s heart who can be trusted with the lives of Father’s Family.
 - A. Abraham – Gen. 17:5
 - B. David – Mark 11:10
 - C. Jesus – Jn. 14:7-9
 - D. Paul – 1 Cor. 4:15

What are the essentials of a true biblical spiritual family?:

1. Christ is the Head. God is Father
2. The highest values are in place: God’s glory, God’s love, Centrality and Supremacy of Christ, Kingdom of God, Great Commission. There is a vision for advancing Christ’s kingdom in every area of life.
3. The Word of God is the authoritative basis of faith and practice.
4. The Holy Spirit flows within and upon the people.
5. Each person has the revelation of “sonship” and is being healed and transformed into Christ’s likeness in the context of spiritual family.
6. The people are of one mind, heart, and lifestyle through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Father’s heart is evident.
7. There is a culture, practice and lifestyle of covenant love, joy, affection.
8. The fruit of the Spirit are evident. Gal. 5:22
9. The wisdom and revelation of the Spirit are in operation. Eph. 1:17-18
10. The power and gifts of the Spirit are operative. 1 Cor. 12, 14:1-40
11. Each member of the family is on gospel mission as a lifestyle. They are missionary “soldiers” in an army of love. Luke 10, 19:10, Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:3-5
12. Making disciples is a way of life. Matt. 28:18-
13. Everyone “fellowships in the light” (transparent sharing of our inner conversation). They are connected relationally to help one another become like Christ and reach others for Christ. (2 & 3’s, Missional Kingdom Families interconnected) 1 Jn.
14. The family members proclaim and demonstrate the gospel, especially to youth, poor, and unreached.
15. Biblical elders and deacons govern local churches. 1 Tim. 3:1-; 1 Pet 5:1-
16. All local churches are a part of a family-of-churches (“tribe”) which are governed by godly leaders who are in five-fold ministry “teams” (apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors). 1 Co.12:28; Eph. 4:11-

Key Questions For Discussion:

1. How does the Word of God describe Christ’s Body, Community, Family?
2. What are the essential elements necessary to make up a true Christian “Body”, “Community”, “Family”?
3. What is the meaning of the word “covenant”? How are we to apply?
4. What is the role of Biblical government in Christ’s Body-Community-Family? Why is Biblical government important to Christian Body-life, Community, Family?
5. According to the Word of God is it possible to live in Christ and not live in Christ’s Body-Family? Why or why not? Can you have Christ and not have Christ’s Body and be a Christian? Why or why not? Can you live in Christ’s Body and not live “in Christ” as the Head of the Body and still be a Christian? Why or why not?
6. Can you say you love God and not love people and consider yourself a Christian? What is the indication that you are, in fact, a true follower of Jesus Christ?
7. What does the Word of God mean when it tells us to live deeply connected in Christ’s Body-Community-Family? How does the Word of God describe “Body Life”, “Christian Community”, “Spiritual Family”? According to the Biblical definition and practice of Christian Body-life, community, and spiritual family, would you say that you are a life-giving contributing member in the Body-Community-Family of God?
8. How does the current practice of church body-life in the Western Church fit the Biblical standards? How does it fall short?
9. What is the role of apostles and prophets in Christ’s Body-Community-Family? Describe the way all local churches in the New Testament are connected to a trans-local family-of-churches led by apostles and prophets? Does the word of God ever validate the notion of a local, independent church that is not a part of a trans-local family-of-church families? Why or why not?