

God's Family

As I sit here in my home office on Monday night, I look back over the events of the day. This is the first day of my wife's family reunion, this year hosted by the two of us here in Hewitt. Each year, the remaining sisters and brother of the Smithson clan meet together, rotating the site of the meeting between the cities in which each of them lives. Last year, it was Springfield, Missouri, where Toni's sister Vicki lives with her husband Joe. The year before, it was Amarillo, Texas, where her sister Karen and Karen's husband Jim live. Next year, it should be hosted by Toni's brother Terry and his wife JoAnn in Weimar, Texas. Some members of their extended families also attend, allowing cousins and to get together, sometimes for the first time in a long time. It is a happy time of reunion.

It's happened before, I know, but every time I think of reunions, I also think of the Lord's church. We most certainly are a family, calling each other brothers and sisters, some referring to others that they've had a hand in converting sons or daughters. Over and over again, members of the church are referred to in the New Testament this way. Paul calls Timothy his "**son in the faith**" in **1 Timothy 1:2**, and Titus in **Titus 1:4**. The comparison of church to family is hard to miss. (**Galatians 6:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:10, Hebrews 2:11, 1 Peter 2:17, 5:9**)

The word family is defined by Webster as "a basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group." This definition describes the church perfectly. God is our Father, Jesus is our brother, as are all of those who have been "**born of God**", a favorite phrase John uses in his first letter to describe us. (**1 John 4:7, 5:1, 5:4, 5:18**)

My wife absolutely LOVES to get together with her family. I have written on occasion that when I was a kid, I LOVED to go to my mother's family's reunion each June in Belton. Toni and I both LOVE reuniting with all fifteen in our family: us, our children, and their spouses and children. When one or two are missing, the occasion is still joyful, although we miss them and the things they add to it.

I've said all that to repeat something I've said numerous times in the past. As a family of God, we should want ALL of us to meet together as often as we can. We want everyone's input, because it is uniquely their own. Your talents are needed. Your encouragement by being in attendance is uplifting.

Let me end with a song we often sing from our hymnal. Maybe it can say what I have tried to say in my own feeble way:

***We're part of a family that's been born again,
part of a family whose love knows no end;
for Jesus has saved us and made us His own'
now we're part of a family that's on its way home.***

***And sometimes we laugh together, sometimes we cry;
Sometimes we share together, heartaches and sighs;
Sometimes we dream together of how it will be
When we all get to heaven, God's family.***

Lanny Wolfe

Remember this: You are an important member of God's family. When we can't meet together in service to our Father, we both suffer. Your talents and encouragement are an integral part to the success of the Lord's church. It doesn't function properly without you. **(Romans 12:4-8)** We need you.

See you next Sunday morning.

--- Johnny Stephens