

Discovery Group - Church Pillars

2 - God's Family

Receive God's Word: Passage

- * Read the passage aloud one person retell it in their own words.
 - What do we learn from the passage about God?

 - What do we learn about ourselves as people?

- * Read the article on the other side.
 - What do these passages teach about the local church?

 - According to the Matthew passage, who is part of Jesus' family?

 - Which of the five implications of church as family are most challenging to you personally? Why?

Respond in Obedience

- * Obey: What is Jesus calling you to *do* in obedience this week?

- * Abide: Study and meditate on the following scriptures:
 - Ephesians 2:19-20
 - 1 Peter 2:17
 - 1 Corinthians 4:15-17

God's Family

God has a family - a very big family - that is made up of many smaller families. These smaller families are tied to a specific location and are known as churches ("the church in Ephesus," etc). The Bible often uses the work *household* to refer to these tight-knit communities. The idea that local churches are referred to as households (or families) has significant implications. These include:

- (1) All families have a **culture**, or a common understanding of 'how we do things here.' This is evident in Paul's wording to Timothy: "*you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household...*" We have shared values and beliefs and behaviors which are to be passed on to all who are part of the family. There are expectations.
- (2) The household concept also speaks to **structure and leadership**. The 1 Timothy 3 passage we are discussing is given in the context of instructions regarding overseers. These elders operate as family leaders - dads and moms of the spiritual community. They serve, love, protect, and seek to lift those they lead into greater maturity and fruitfulness.
- (3) Church as family also speaks to the way we train, or **disciple** people. It is motivated by love and a desire to see each person become all they can be. It is self-sacrificing and relational. It is both intentional and spontaneous - just like parents raising kids. It is personalized, so that each person is treated in ways appropriate to their personality, understanding, maturity, etc.
- (4) Family also gives a picture of how churches are to **grow** - not merely by adding more and more people into one home - but by sons and daughters growing up, getting married, moving out, and beginning families of their own.
- (5) Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the family language used in scripture challenges us to relate to one another in **familial love** - to actually *be* brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. To have that kind of unwavering commitment and relentless love. To be secure in intimacy and mutual affection. To have one another's back. To be committed and loyal and mutually submissive. To believe in and champion one another.