

10) Family of God

There is an old saying: “birds of a feather flock together”. That is true for many valuable reasons. Yet society and culture seems to teach that each person is an island unto themselves. People sometimes think that they should be capable to “go it alone” in life rather than relying on others. Some would even teach that anything other than self-reliance is a weakness. So when some people say that church membership or attendance is not important, what does God say?

Lets discover what the Bible teaches about the family of God

John 13:34,35. Love, pure love, is more than what God does, its what He is, it is His very nature and character! But love would be very selfish and evil without someone to love. When Christ abides in us, we also become loving, to Him and to others. This is a pure love that will let the world know that we belong to God.

John 17:21. One of Jesus’ most important prayers was that His followers would be united, with one another and with Him.

Psalms 133:1. I think most everyone can appreciate the presence of love, peace, and unity; and the absence of strife and dissension. God wants their to be peace, cooperation, and unity among his followers.

Ephesians 5:21. True unity of believers requires true surrender of self to God and His truth.

1 Peter 5:5. Unity requires humility, a surrender of self, which can only come from abiding in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:11. Within God’s family of believers, the church, behavior will be manifest that helps and builds up one another. In some respects the church could be compared to a hospital. Yes there are sick people there (even the staff), but they should be receiving help to get better, and be getting better, and then helping others get better.

Hebrews 10:24,25. God instructs His followers not to cease, interrupt, or miss church gathering times. Part of the purpose of believers gathering together is that it provides opportunity to learn each others needs and then to help one another to the extent possible.

Matthew 18:20. God makes a point to be with His people even in small group gatherings, further highlighting the importance of gathering with like believers!

Revelation 12:17. Some of Satan’s worst attacks are when he attacks through God’s people, His church. But we should expect that Satan will attack God’s true believers and church. He hates God and anyone who follows God or truthfully represents God. Scripture tells us that we can identify God’s final remnant church before He returns by these

characteristics: 1) they keep all ten of God's commandments. 2) In addition to having God's pure love, they proclaim through their testimony, in word and lifestyle, the truth of Jesus Christ and His gospel. They uplift Christ and point others to Him as Creator, Redeemer/Savior, High Priest, and Judge.

Revelation 19:10. Since sin entered this world, God has communicated to people through the work and ministry of prophets – men and women with the gift of prophecy. God's final remnant church before He returns will still have within it's body the ministry of the gift of prophecy.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31. God's final remnant church before He returns will be organized for ministry. It will have all the spiritual gifts within it as and when needed, including the gift of prophecy. They will not all have the same gifts, or naturally developed talents, as this helps build inter-dependence (teamwork) and relationship.

John 15:1,5. When we are abiding in Christ, He will, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, provide these spiritual gifts to the members of the church.

Ephesians 5:23. Scripture uses the illustration of marriage to teach how Christ is the head of His bride, His church.

Colossians 1:18. It also uses the illustration of a body with Christ as the head and His church as the rest of the body.

Ephesians 4:11-13. The purpose of spiritual gifts is two fold: 1) Outreach and 2) Nurture. Spiritual gifts are to build up the church by equipping it to share the everlasting gospel with the world and nurturing those who have accepted it and joined God's remnant church and body of Christ. Those gifts will be with His church until the end of time as they are to help His church fully reflect the character of Christ.

1 Peter 5:10. Have you allowed God's grace to settle you into His call, His grace and mercy, and His bride, the church body?