

The Family of Believers in the Dispensation of the Church

1. Doing the will of God the Father (by believing in Jesus Christ, Jn. 6:29) is what enters us into our new family relationship in Christ (Matt. 12:46-48).
 - a. Our new family relationship means we must come out and be separate from unbelievers (2nd Cor. 6:18), and live lives of purity among our fellow believers (1st Tim. 5:1,2).
 - b. Our new family relationship in Christ may spark open hatred on the part of our natural family (Matt. 10:21,35,36). Consequently, we must rightly distinguish our priorities (Matt. 10:37).
 - c. Our new family relationship can even overcome former adversarial relationships (Acts 9:17; 22:13).
2. Do not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your Father (Matt. 23:9).
 - a. Yet, Paul became the Corinthians' father (1st Cor. 4:15).
 - 1) Timothy was his beloved and faithful child (1st Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22).
 - 2) Titus was his "true child in a common faith" (Tit. 1:4).
 - 3) Onesimus was his begotten child (Philem. 10), as was "brother" Philemon at one time (Philem. 19,20).
 - 4) Paul became the "nursing mother" of the Thessalonians (1st Thess. 2:7), and entered into a second labor with the Galatians (Gal. 4:19).
 - b. New Testament examples of family vocabulary.
 - 1) Brother or sister (1st Cor. 7:15; Jms. 2:15); brethren (Acts 1:15,16; 6:3; & often).
 - 2) Sister Phoebe (Rom. 16:1).
 - 3) Sosthenes our brother (1st Cor. 1:1).
 - 4) Apollos our brother (1st Cor. 16:12).
 - 5) Timothy our brother (2nd Cor. 1:1).
 - 6) Titus my brother (2nd Cor. 2:13).
 - 7) Tychicus, the beloved brother (Eph. 6:21).
3. Our new family relationship means we must handle our own matters and not go outside the family (1st Cor. 6:6).
4. Our family as children of God the Father motivates our integrity love and and orients us to the Father's standard of perfection (Matt. 5:43-48).