

### A/ Teaching

***Bible Material – Key Points*** - based on Matthew 12v46-50

[Illustration: Siblings; Family in ancient world]

### **Close Family Relation**

- Jesus calls us “Brother, Sister & Mother” if we do the Father’s will (Matthew 12v50)
  - Jesus is firstborn among brothers (Romans 8v29, Hebrews 2v11)
  - Our family is based on the Father (Ephesians 3v14-15, 1 John 4v19-21)
  - We are members of one household (Ephesians 2v18)
  - Paul frequently describes people as brothers/ sisters (Philemon 2, Romans 16v7)
  - Family is a Fact, Friendship is a Feat (John 15v13-15)
- ⇒ Remember who you both are!

### **Common Family Experience**

- Born again as children of God (John 1v12)
  - Common baptism, Spirit, Father, Lord, faith, hope, body (Ephesians 4v3-5)
- ⇒ Remember what you share!

### **Common Family Business**

- Do the will of the Father (Matthew 12v50)
  - Make disciples together (Matthew 28v19-20, Luke 10v1, Acts 13v2)
  - Be Sanctified in love (Romans 8v28-29, Ephesians 5v1-2,25-27)
  - United in one body (Ephesians 2v19-22, 4v3-5, 4v11-13)

⇒ Join in!

### **Common Family Inheritance**

- Resurrection, live with God, new heaven & earth (Revelation 21v1-5)
- ⇒ Remember this is for eternity!

### **Family Code of Friendship– *Practical “How to Develop relationship”***

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|---|--|
| • Initiation - baptism (Ephesians 3v5)        | • Confer with Father – Prayer (Acts 2v42)        |
| • Celebration - communion (1 Cor 11v23-26)    | • Care for each (Matt 25v40, 1 John 3v16-18)     |
| • Eat together – agape meals (1 Cor 11v17-22) | • Talk family matters (Eph 5v19-20, Jn 15v13-15) |
| • Greet one another – holy kiss (1 Cor 16v20) | • No favouritism (James 2v1-11)                  |
| • Nurture - each other (1 Thessalonians 5v11) | • Partner in work (Philippians 1v5)              |

## B/ Personal Reflection & Development - Materials available

Some of the following may help you reflect on these things further:

- Key Bible Passages with regards to us being one family or body:
  - John 17v20-23
  - Romans 12v3-21
  - 1 Corinthians 12v12-13v13
  - Ephesians 2v22-22, 4v1-16
  - James 2v1-13
  - 1 John 3v10-24, 4v7-21
- Think about your friendships in the church.
  - The following table may help you think about what level your friendships are at?

Level	Type	Group size	Description
5	Intimate Friend	1 or 2	Committed development of character, totally open, "soul to soul"
4	Close Friend	Several	Common values, goals, work
3	Casual Friend	Tens	Common interests
2	Acquaintance	Many	General knowledge
1	Stranger	The rest	No awareness

*(ref "Stages of Friendship" by Jermaine Tucker)*

- Some of us find it harder to develop close relationships than others. Jesus turns the question "Who is my neighbor?" around to "Who am I a neighbor to?" (Luke 10v25-37)
- The following books may be of help in your journey:
  - "Total Church" Tim Chester
  - "God's New Community" Graham Benyon
- Meditate on some songs:
  - A new commandment, I give unto you (anon)
  - Let there be love shared among us (Dave Bilbroughg)
  - Jesus stand among us (Graham Kendrick)
- Key Bible verses to memorise and meditate on:
  - John 13v34-35; 1 John 4v21
- Further study:
  - Some count 59 "One another" commands (eg "Love one another") in the New Testament – how many can you find? Reflect on these.

Reflect on some of the "Small Team" and "Pair/Triplet" material before meeting.

## C/ Small Team (1 hour 15mins + worship)

- Worship
  
- Summary of “Bible Material” (5 mins)
- Talk Questions (15 mins)
  - Our Family heritage
    - What do you think of being a brother/mother/sister of Jesus?
    - What have we all got in common?
  - Our family direction
    - What does the Father want his family to do? (See “family business”)
    - Where are we heading for?
    - When is our relationship with each other going to end? (!)
  
- Summary of “Practical” (5 mins)
- Practical Questions (30 mins)
  - The following questions are based on the “Family Code of Friendship” in the talk:
  - Have you been baptized? Why or why not?
  - Do you see communion as a celebration? Why or why not?
  - Do you enjoy eating together? Why or why not?
  - How do you think we should greet one another?
  - How can we nurture one another better?
  - Do you find talking to God together easy?
  - Does our conversation tend toward “family matters” and thanksgiving (Eph 5v19-20) or other things?
  - In what ways might favouritism be shown in the church family?
  - What work of God are you a partner in?
  - How well as a church family do we foster healthy friendships? How can this be improved? (see table in section B)
  - What is the greatest block to these things in our lives? (Too busy to have time, fear of opening up, fear of the commitment it might mean, fear of being let down, protection of our own interests ...)
  - What do you think we most need to focus on as a church family?
  
- Pray together (20 mins)
  - Pray for unity, friendship and a genuine godly family atmosphere
  - Pray for your “*list-of-5*” – pray that the church would be a light to them by its unity!

## D/ Pair/Triplet (40 mins)

- The goal is not to be right but to help one another as brothers/sisters in God (Ecclesiastes 4v12).
- Share and Discuss together (15 mins)
  - Share encouragements you have had from bible reading / prayer / worship.
  - Share how you feel about friendships in the church using the table in Section B?
  - What is your greatest hurdle to living more as a church family?
- Read a passage from the Bible together (this could be one that one of you has read during the week or 1 Corinthians 13). (15 mins)
  - What does this passage say about our love for one another?
  - What does this passage say about how loveable people are?
  - How do our gifts and abilities compare to love?
  - Think about God's love for you - In what way is God comforting me from this passage?
  - Think about your love for others - In what way is God challenging me from this passage?
- Pray together (10 mins)
  - Give thanks and pray for one another based on the Bible passage and your discussion.
  - Pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit to bring a greater abundance of love. You may like to use Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3v14-19.
  - Pray for God to enable you to develop growing and lasting friendships.
  - Pray for your "list-of-5".