

## Discipleship Questions

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How is it tempting to view relationships from the perspective of either selfishness or isolationism?

How is companionship designed to be beneficial for everyone involved?

Who is part of God's family?

How are people related in God's family?

What is the difference in the support you receive in following Jesus between your physical and spiritual families?

How should your relationship be different with those who are in the world versus those who are part of God's family?

What are some other ways you should consider the members of God's family?

How is the greeting between Christians "holy"?



# God's Family

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## Lesson 1: A Holy Relationship

From the beginning of the Bible, we learn about the problem of aloneness and the value of having companions (Genesis 2:18-24). Sadly, the concepts of family and companionship are often perverted in society from how God designed them. Thankfully, He has provided His people with an even greater opportunity for family and companionship. Therefore, we need to take time to recognize and appreciate the family God has created for His people and the things involved in this holy relationship.

### Ecclesiastes 4:8-12

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There is a great temptation to move in one of two directions regarding relationships. One is to view them in a self-centered way that uses others as a means of accomplishing something for yourself. The other is to isolate from others (whether physically trying to stay away from people or keeping very private). This passage, though, demonstrates the mutually beneficial nature of companionship (e.g. to share in rewards for work, to lift the fallen, to keep warm, to be safe). All these benefits require a two-way street of giving and receiving, not just asking for help when you want/need something. The final illustration of the cord is especially useful in considering the value of companionship. Though a single-strand cord (representative of a life without companions) has some strength, it is broken far easier than a cord of three strands. Therefore, there is great wisdom in determining to live in a way that is intertwined with others!

## Matthew 12:46-50

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Jesus had a physical family during His life on earth. However, Jesus considered Himself to have an even greater family. Foremost of these, He considered Himself to have a Father in Heaven (Luke 2:41-50). Then, Jesus considered those who would do the will of His Father in Heaven to be His family! Although there is great value in the physical family God designed, there are many times in which this family unit has been corrupted by wickedness so that it does not accomplish the purpose God has designed it to fulfill or provide the companionship God has intended. Still, this passage points to the blessing God has given to Christians in having another family – a spiritual family. Rather than this family being related through the physical seed and blood of common ancestors, it is a relation that is through the imperishable seed of God’s word and the redeeming blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:22-25; Ephesians 1:5-8). When you believe and obey God and Jesus as His Son, you then are adopted as a child of God, become a coheir with Jesus (your Brother), and are a brother/sister to all others who are adopted as God’s children (Romans 8:14-17; Hebrews 2:11).

## Matthew 10:34-39

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Many families and earthly relationships value things that rebel against God and punish attempts to serve God. So, Jesus warned His apostles in this passage that the choice to confess Him (Matthew 10:32-33) will have serious implications on physical relationships (including the family). To profess Jesus as Lord and live according to that profession often results in having people in our lives turn against us. Yet, Jesus emphasizes the need for His people to follow Him regardless of these consequences (Luke 14:25-27, 33)! Having this spiritual family of those committed to the will of God is, therefore, invaluable to the companionship God has designed for His people. For, while many throughout the world turn away from you because of your allegiance to Jesus, these will support and encourage you in that life!

## 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

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Christians are part of a fellowship (sharing, participation) in all the spiritual blessings that God has made available in and through Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-7). As we have seen, this provides a tremendous opportunity for companionship in God’s family. However, this passage

should also help us appreciate the importance of considering who our lives become intertwined with. Not only do those who are living in rebellion against Jesus not provide us the companionship God desires His people to experience, but God even warns about the dangers of evil companions (1 Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 1:10-19). Although Christians still live in the world and must interact with the people of the world (Luke 5:27-32; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13), Christians must not partner with people who do not believe (Ephesians 5:6-14). For, their lives are simply moving in different and opposite directions!

## Romans 16:3-16

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This passage helps to demonstrate the way the apostle Paul considered His brothers and sisters in Christ (in Rome, a place he had not visited; Romans 1:8-15). He referred to these Christians as coworkers, dear friends, fellow prisoners, saints, etc. But, it was not just Paul who viewed and greeted his brothers and sisters in Christ in these special ways. Paul instructed all Christians to greet one another with a holy kiss (1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14). As a kiss was a typical greeting extended between people of the time, Paul emphasized that the greeting between Christians is “holy.” That is, their greeting is set apart from all other greetings given to people. For, the relationship you share with them is unlike any other relationship in this world (family, friend, coworker, neighbor, etc.). This relationship is all about providing companionship that centers around your mutual faith and commitment to Jesus Christ, as you anticipate receiving the inheritance God will provide His children!

## Conclusion

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God has designed mankind to be social creatures who need companionship in life. However, while many relationships can be experienced, God has provided His people with a spiritual family. Understanding and valuing these relationships is critical to accomplishing all that God has designed concerning them in your life.

Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

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