

Five Privileges Of Being A Family

First Peter 2:17 reads, "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king." The Greek word translated as "brotherhood" is adelphotes and means "brotherhood, brotherly kindness, a family of brothers, the brotherhood." Christians are members of a brotherhood or a family of brothers. God is our father (Romans 8:14-17), Jesus is our brother (Hebrews 2:11-12), and we are a part of the household of God (1 Timothy 3:15). We should be appreciative of this family to which we belong, and we should recognize the privileges of being a part of this family of Christians. Here are a few for you to consider.

First, fellowship is a privilege of the family of Christians. Philippians 1:3-5 says, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." The term "fellowship" in Philippians 1:3-5 is translated from the Greek word koinonia and means, "fellowship, association, community, communion, or joint participation." In order for fellowship to be a privilege, we have to share in the work and realize there is a place for everyone. Although a congregation is made of several individual members, the work cannot be completed by just an individual member. Each of us has to step forward and take an active role. There would be no joy in achieving something of importance in the kingdom of God if you did not have any part of it. So fellowship in the work is a privilege of the Christian family.

Second, social contact is a privilege of the family of Christians. Acts 2:46 says, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." In order for social contact to be a privilege, we need to remember our relationship as a family. We are not small families that come together to worship for a few hours a week. We are bound together by a common relationship in Christ to form a household of God (Ephesians 2:19). This means that we need to be willing to rejoice and weep with those rejoice and weep (Romans 12:10-16).

Third, discipline is a privilege of the family of Christians. Galatians 6:1-2 says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." In order for discipline to be a privilege, we have to first care for the spiritual nature of our brethren. But, in instances where there is a refusal to repent, the church is obligated exercise discipline (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). This is a privilege in the respect that we attempt to set someone right before God.

Fourth, guidance is a privilege of the family of Christians. A preacher teaches us what we need to know in order to live a godly life. Paul said, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached

unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Timothy 3:14-16; cp. 4:1-11). Elders exercise oversight, making certain to feed the flock of God (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4). In order for guidance to be a privilege, we listen to and follow the instructions taught from the word of God.

Fifth, benevolence is a privilege of the family of Christians. Acts 4:32-37 says, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.” Often, without even meaning to, we find ourselves in physical or financial straits. In order for benevolence to be a privilege, we have to be willing to help each other physically and we must care for the well-being of one another.

Before you let yourself gripe and grumble about the church and one another, stop and reflect on the privileges of being a part of the wonderful family of Christians. Be thankful for the privileges such as fellowship, the social contact, discipline, guidance, and benevolence.

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