

# The Household Of God

When one examines the church, they can learn a lot from looking at the terms used to describe it. One of them is "house." In the Bible, "house," as expected, is used to designate families (Luke 1:27; Acts 10:2; Hebrews 11:7). However, the church is referred to as the "house of God" which equates the church with a family (Ephesians 2:19; 3:15; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6).

In the realm of a family, God is the Father (Ephesians 3:16; 4:6; Matthew 23:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). Christ is a son over the house of God (Hebrews 3:6). Because all Christians are children of God, Christians are His brethren (Matthew 23:8; 25:40). Hebrews 2:12 says, "*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*" Along those lines, Christians are sons and heirs in Christ (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 3:26; 4:7). This is a strong spiritual relationship with the holy God, so Christians stand in opposition to the children of the devil (1 John 3:10). All of God's children are in God's family, and God's family is the church (1 Thessalonians 1:1). Therefore, all of God's children are in the church.

What are the blessings of the relationship? First, we have an approach to God as our Father (Matthew 6:6-9; Ephesians 3:14). We have His fatherly provision (Romans 8:32; James 1:17; Matthew 6:8, 33-34; 7:7-11), correction (Hebrews 12:4-11), and love (1 John 3:1; Romans 8:38-39). Because God is our Father, we are His heirs (Romans 8:17; Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:3-5). Second, we have Christ as our High Priest and advocate (Hebrews 4:14; 10:21; 1 John 2:1). Third, we have the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. Romans 8:14 says, "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*" The Spirit is the truth of God (John 16:13). John stated, "*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*" (1 John 5:7). We receive the Holy Spirit because we are sons. Furthermore, because we receive the Spirit, we then walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

The demands of the relationship involve being separated from the world (2 Corinthians 6:17-18; 7:1; 1 John 2:15-16). Christians also have to be obedient as children (Romans 8:12-17; Ephesians 5:6; 1 Peter 1:14; 1 John 3:10). We have to consider our relationship toward brethren, which is an obligation to love (1 John 4:7, 20-21; 3:13-19). Because Christians walk by the Spirit, as we saw above in Galatians 5:16, we must not walk after the flesh. John said, "*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ*

*his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John 1:6-7). Finally, while some may see this as unimportant, or would willingly substitute another name, Christians should wear the family name that was given by God (Acts 4:11-12; 11:26; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:15-16).

How do we enter the family relationship? First and foremost, we enter because of the gracious provision of God (John 3:16). Ephesians 2:8 says, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."* However, there is something that God requires of mankind. It begins with faith (Galatians 3:26-27). Hebrews 11:6 says, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* Acting on our faith includes repenting of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30), confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-10), and by being baptized into Christ (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27). It is baptism that washes away our sins and saves us (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

All of these characteristics ought to make us wonderfully appreciative of the rich blessings we enjoy in Christ. In fact, Peter emphasizes that it is our duty to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). Knowing that you are a part of the *"household,"* are you up to the task?

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