

## Household of Faith

Over the next four weeks we are focusing on our value of authentic community. We will look at some of the dominant images of the church given in the New Testament: the household of God, the body of Christ, and a Royal Priesthood. These images should inform the way we think about and treat each other in our group as well as others at Faith. Today, we begin by looking at the image of the church as a family or a household of faith.

**Opening Discussion:** What is one of your fondest family memories?

### Read Matthew 12:46-50

1. Jesus wasn't trying to be mean with his family here. What critical perspective was He trying to communicate?
2. How does Jesus define family?
3. Why is doing the will of the Father critical to living as a family in the church?

### Read 1 Timothy 3:14-15

4. How does Paul describe the church?
5. Read 1 Tim. 5:1-2. How does Paul use the concept of family/household to shape how he wants people to conduct themselves in the church?

6. What are the implications of the church being “the pillar and support of the truth?” And what does being a healthy family have to do with this?

Steve said:

You might have shown up this morning thinking, "I just wanted to go to the church building for an hour or so, sing some songs, hear a message, and then leave. But I show up and they're talking about being a family! That's a little more than I was counting on." Or you may be thinking, "I've already got a good family; I don't need another one." Or you may be thinking, "I'm not all that crazy about the family I'm a part of already, so why would I want to be part of *another* family?" I simply want to acknowledge that the idea of the local church being "the family of God" may scare you or turn you off. In many cases, that's understandable. This identity is something that some people need to grow into. Others, however, enter into the local church with great expectations about living their lives with others in the family of God. Some of us here long for the type of relationships that characterize a good, healthy family. Some people have never experienced this and want to. Some have experienced this and want more of it.

7. Is the image of the church as a family more of a positive or a negative image for you? Why?
8. For good or bad, the family in which we grew up has formed us. What, if any, mindsets or ways of interacting have you “learned” from your family that need to be transformed into more healthy ways of relating in the family of God?
9. What does the concept of being a family mean for the level of concern, commitment and involvement that we should have for one another?