

Love One Another

- Ron Stullenbarger -

The words of Jesus in Matthew 6:9 radically changed the way God's people are to relate to him. Scripture says, "*Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'*" Through Jesus, we now come before God as His child. And because God is our Father, fellow believers are now our spiritual family. Other disciples of Jesus are our brothers and sisters, and church is now a spiritual family reunion designed to be centered on the love and goodness of our Father.

1 John 3:1 says, "*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.*" We have been brought into fellowship with one another because God loves us. We are children of God because He longs to have the relationship of a father and his children with us. In fact, God created the family unit to be an earthly reflection of His heavenly family.

Scripture is clear that it is incredibly important that God's children love one another. Colossians 3:12-15 says, "*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.*"

For the church to work as "one body," its members must commit to loving one another as Christ has loved us. Church requires selfless acts of grace, love, honor, and respect. It requires sacrificial commitment. The result is a glorious union founded on and fueled by the depth of God's love.

The world will come to join our family as we increasingly love one another. Jesus said in John 13:35, "*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*" The world isn't enticed by rules and regulations. And it assuredly isn't enticed with drama, quarreling, bickering, slander, and division. The world needs real, loving relationship with God and His family. The world needs love.

May we be children of God committed to the people of God. May we receive and give the grace of our heavenly Father to all those He has brought into our spiritual family. May we love our brothers and sisters in Christ so that the world might know the love of the Father when it sees us.