

# FORMED FOR GOD'S FAMILY

## Week 3

Last week, we looked at God's first purpose for our lives, which is to get to know Him and to love Him. The Bible calls that worship because you were planned for God's pleasure. And today, we're going to look at the second purpose, which is we are formed for God's family. [Hebrews 2:10](#) says, [In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists.](#) God wanted a family. That's why we're here. He wanted children. And the Bible says He planned everything in the entire universe so we could be born, so we could share in His glory, so we could be part of His family. The next verse says, [Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.](#) The entire Bible is the story of God building a family for Himself that is going to last not just here on earth, but for eternity. It is an eternal family. In [1 Peter 2:17](#), Peter writes, [Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers.](#) That's what God wants us to do. That is the second purpose of our lives.

Why does God want us to love them? Three reasons: first, it makes us more like God, because God is love; second, he wants His children to learn to get along together; and third, it's practice for eternity. One of the things we're going to do in heaven, in eternity, is we're going to love God. And the other thing we're going to do is we're going to love the other believers that are there. It's going to be a place of love. So God says, "I want you to practice now learning to love other believers." The word the Bible uses to describe loving each other is [fellowship](#). Now, again, this word, like the word 'worship', is often misunderstood. Go out and ask people in church what they believe is meant by the word fellowship and a lot will say, talking together after the service, tea and coffee, meeting in small groups, having a meal together. All great things to do, but NOT fellowship. Fellowship is loving God's family. And the Bible says in, [1 John 4:21](#), [Whoever loves God must also love his brother.](#) We have to love other believers.

In God's family there are four levels of fellowship:

- 1) Choosing to belong;
- 2) Learning to share;
- 3) Doing my part; and
- 4) Loving believers like family.

### 1) [Choosing to belong](#)

This is the most basic level. It means we find a church family and we choose to get connected to it. The Bible says in [Ephesians 2:19](#), [You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.](#) We belong. The Christian life is not just a matter of believing. It's a matter of belonging, and you and I must choose to belong. God wants us to identify to make the choice to be a part of His family. When we're born, we automatically became a part of [the](#) human race. But we have to choose to belong to the family of God, the Church. Some people say, "Well, I'm a Christian, but I don't want to belong to any church." That just doesn't make sense. The church is where we live out what it means to be a Christian. That's like saying, "I'm a football player, but I don't want to be a part of any team." It doesn't work. A Christian without a church family is an orphan. God meant us to be a part of a family.

Romans 12:5 says, [So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We are members together.](#) Now, I know the word "membership," is a funny word to some of us. But did you know that this word originally was a Christian word? It came right out of these verses in Romans. I know that today it is used for being a member of every kind of club and signing up for this and joining that. But originally, the meaning was right here in the Bible; a member of the Body of Christ. Just like our hand is a member of our body, that's how tightly we're tied to each other.

### 2) [Learning to share](#)

The second level of fellowship is a little bit deeper, when we go a little further into the family of God, and this is learning to share. We were created in God's image, so we were made for relationships. Life is not a solo act. And we need friends. The Bible says in [Acts 2:44](#), [All the believers were together and had everything in common.](#) Notice two things here: one, you can't develop friendships without meeting together; and two, you can't develop friendships without sharing. Now, the more frequently we meet together, the closer we're going to get. Do you know why most people are lonely? They don't make time for friendships. They're too busy achieving; they're too busy working; they're too busy doing other things. They're not willing to put the time into it.

And until we start saying this is going to be a priority in our life, we're not going to develop any deep friends. They don't just happen. God says "You know what? In the family of God I want you to learn to share with other believers." So what are we supposed to share? Well, the Bible is full of instructions on things we're to share as Christians with each other. Let me just mention three.

1. The Bible says we're to share our **experiences**. It's wise to learn from the experiences of other people, because we don't have time to make all the mistakes ourself. You see, if everything we learn in life we learn personally by trial and error, we're going to go through a lot of problems unnecessarily and when we figure it all out, we're dead. We don't have enough time to learn everything on our own. So God says we can short-circuit and learn a lot quicker if we learn from the experiences of others. Nobody knows everything. We're all ignorant, just on different subjects. So you know some things I don't know and I know some things thing you don't know. So we're to share our experience with others.
2. The Bible says we're to share our **homes**. [1 Peter 4:9, Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling](#). It doesn't say if they're really nice ones, open them up. It just says open them up. Why are we to share our homes? Because we can't fellowship in a crowd. We can only fellowship in a small group. Or one on one. That's where we really get to know people. Did you know in the first 300 years of Christianity, there were no church buildings? All church meetings were held in homes. And that was the fastest period of growth for the church. One of the reasons for encouraging people to part of a small group is because it's a Biblical principle. Christians are supposed to meet in homes.
3. The Bible says, we're to share our **problems**. We're not meant to face our problems alone. Paul writes in [Galatians 6:2, Carry each other's burdens](#). When we share a joy, it's doubled; and when we share a problem, it's halved. [Romans 12:15](#) says, [Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn](#). We don't have to fix everybody's problem. God hasn't told us to do that. It just says share them. This means lend a listening ear. In fact, a lot of times, trying to fix a problem doesn't help. It's just sitting there and sharing sympathy and experience.

### 3) **Doing my part**

The third level is partnership. Partnership is realising that I've got a contribution to make; that the family of God needs me. God didn't bring you to Vale Community Church or Lidlington Church to sit and soak in some spiritual spa. That's not why you're here. He brought you here to serve. He wants to make a difference through your life. Every one of us has a part to play. The Bible is filled with the fact that you and I are to work with one another in getting this job done. There are 58 times in the New Testament where the Bible says we do it with one another. We serve one another. We love one another. We pray with one another. The Bible even says we have to put up with one another when we're doing all of this. That's how it works together. This is love in action. Not just in words.

Paul says in [1 Corinthians 3:9, For we are God's fellow workers](#). In the Greek, the word "fellowship" is often translated "partnership." That's how close these two words are. Have you ever wanted to be part of a great team, something that just did something great? Well in the church, we are part of the greatest enterprise that's ever existed. We get to be part of God's plan for the universe. That's what it is all about, when we cooperate and participate together in the family of God. But in order to be a part, we've got to find out, "Where do I fit, how I do I fit?" [Ephesians 4:16](#) says, [From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work](#). We are a part of God's body. And it's in working together that we get things done.

### 4) **Loving believers like family**

The deepest level of fellowship in the family of God is loving treating and loving believers like they're family. We're completely committed to them. [Acts 2:42](#) says. [They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer](#). God says "Well, we're not just like a family; we are a family." [Romans 12:10](#) says, [Be devoted to one another in brotherly love](#). The word for fellowship in the Bible is the Greek word "koinonia." And the basic root literally means being as committed to each other as we are to Jesus Christ; that is the deepest level of fellowship. That is family relationship. That is saying I'm at the level of being willing to sacrifice for you. [1 John 3:16](#) says, [This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers](#). This is the deepest level of fellowship; sacrificing for each other. It's the kind of love Jesus Christ had for you and me. He died for you and me. How do we get to this deepest level? Well, we do it by standing with other believers when they're going through a crisis. When everybody else walks out, we walk in; we're there for them in the tough times.

Which of these levels of fellowship are we at? Have we even made it to the first one, choosing to belong? Are we part of a small group where we can learn to share? Have we found our niche, how to play our part in the family? And are there any other believers that know we are devoted to them?

**The greatest privilege we will ever be offered in life is a privilege of being part of God's family.**