

## These Are My Brothers

Joseph Carty / General

Evangelism / Love; Brothers and Sisters / Matthew 12:48–50

Jesus considered His disciples to be his closest family members. So it is with our time. Those who are to be closest to us are like minded believers. That means we here to support each other in Christian growth. But how?

## Two Paddleboats

Story of two paddleboats... They left Memphis about the same time, traveling down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. As they traveled side by side, sailors from one vessel made a few remarks about the snail's pace of the other. Words were exchanged. Challenges were made. And the race began. Competition became vicious as the two boats roared through the Deep South.

One boat began falling behind. Not enough fuel. There had been plenty of coal for the trip, but not enough for a race. As the boat dropped back, an enterprising young sailor took some of the ship's cargo and tossed it into the ovens. When the sailors saw that the supplies burned as well as the coal, they fueled their boat with the material they had been assigned to transport. They ended up winning the race, but burned their cargo.

God has entrusted cargo to us, too: children, spouses, those in the body of Christ. Our job is to do our part in seeing that this cargo reaches its destination.

- God has entrusted
  - each of us with
    - each other!

- We are all part
  - of the family in
    - Christ Jesus.

- And we are
  - accountable to
    - each other.

- To answer the
  - ancient question:

[Genesis 4:9](#) (NIV)

... “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

- **“Yes!**
- **You are your**
  - **brothers keeper!”**

# Body of Christ

- Speaking of body
  - of Christ
    - Paul says:

## **1 Corinthians 12:26 ESV**

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

- God called us
  - to support each other.
- To experience the
  - joy
  - hardship
  - wins
  - losses

- In another book

- Paul teaches:

**Galatians 5:13 ESV**

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

- We naturally seek
  - what is good for us.
- Paul teaches,
  - seek what is good
    - for others.
    - (especially body)

**Galatians 6:2 ESV**

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- Foundation of
  - Christian life is
    - bearing burdens

- of fellow believers.
- Problem:
  - must know each other.
  - must spend time with each other.
  - must trust each other.
  - must care for each other.
- Our Ultimate example
  - is Jesus:

**John 15:12–13 ESV**

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

- We can be sure
  - we are moving in
    - right direction if
      - becoming more

- like Jesus.
- Am I becoming more:
  - sacrificial?
  - thoughtful?
  - prayerful?
  - generous?
  - caring?

**Romans 12:13 NIV**

Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

- We are to be
  - thoughtful about
    - anyone's burdens.
- But most of all
  - concerned with
    - fellow believers

- body of Christ.

In 1978, Thomas Hansen of Boulder Colorado, sued his parents for \$350,000 on grounds of "malpractice of parenting." Mom and Dad had botched his upbringing so badly, he charged in his suit, that he would need years of costly psychiatric treatment.

- Every honest parent
  - can see failings...
    - could've done better.
- Don't often think
  - shortcomings
    - obligations to
      - fellow believers.
- Being a believer
  - is often hard.
- Even more true

- of new believer
- to our faith.

## The Family of Jesus

- Living for Jesus
- complex issue.
- Leaving the world
- (leaving Babylon)
- means leaving friends.
  - family
  - friends
  - co-workers
  - associates
  - party people
- Turning to God
- sometimes lonely!



- Body of Christ
  - supposed to fill
    - that void of
      - loss of friends.
- Jesus felt that way:

**Matthew 12:46–47 NIV**

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”

- We must realize
  - Brother did not
    - accept Him as Messiah
      - until after death.
- Almost killed in
  - Nazareth

- Brothers did not
  - support His ministry.
- Why did they come?
  - convince Him to
    - orthodox life?
- His brother perhaps
  - had impact on mom.
- They were “unbelievers.”
- You may know
  - how that feels
    - biological family
      - not with you.
- How does Jesus respond?

**Matthew 12:48–50 ESV**

But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

- He said clearly,
  - my true family is
    - family of believers!
- Today
  - brothers and sisters,
    - I introduce you
      - to your family.
- Invest in relationships here!
  - These will be there
    - for you when you need.
    - more than biological.

- Why?
  - because we trust each other.
    - like minded.
- There are many
  - lonely believers.
- We need each other!

## Rent-A-Wife

Karen Donovan

Petaluma, California,

start up business

People need help

Rent-A-Wife!

Help with:

decorate homes,

balance checkbooks,

run errands,

Rent-A-Husband

mow yard

take out trash

fix broken stuff

Rent-A-Family.

eat all the food,

turn on all the lights,

put handprints on the walls,

take showers

leave the towels on the floor.

Then you'll need

Rent-A-Wife!

- Interesting concept
  - church really is
    - surrogate family
      - not biological
        - here to
          - love
          - support
          - care
          - for each other.
- Isaiah
  - famous verse:

[Isaiah 58:10](#) (NIV)

and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
 and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
 then your light will rise in the darkness,  
 and your night will become like the noonday.

- Verse connected with
  - 11, 12, 13, 14
    - very important to SDA's
      - restoring breach
      - sabbath.
- Message is clear,
  - we need to shine
    - for Jesus.
- But how?
  - in ministry to
    - those in need.
      - world
      - church
- This group is

- “church family.”

## The Family

- Truth is,
  - current families
    - are struggling!

Survey conducted 1989

Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Corp

Greatest threat to family:

inability to spend

enough time with kids.

Respondents concerned with

Decline in family values

not enough time!



35% said:

reason for

Decline in family values

**not enough time!**

22%

lack of

parental discipline.

63% said:

family is

greatest source of pleasure,

Only 44% believed

family life in America

good or excellent.

Only 34% expected

family life to

be good in future.

American knew

heading in direction

hurting family.

Knew that

family is priority

But...

continue down path.

Why???

66% surveyed say:

accept a job

required more away

higher income

or greater prestige. -

- We say:
  - family is priority
    - but don't live it.
- Church family should
  - be priority
    - do we live it?
- God frequently uses
  - image of family
    - symbol of love
      - God for His people.
- In OT
- [Ezek 16](#)

- very graphic chapter
  - God adopting
    - Israel.
- Abortion clinic
  - of ANE was
    - bag in field.

**Ezekiel 16:4–6 NIV**

On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised.

“ ‘Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, “Live!”

- Later in chapter
  - God marries his people
    - blessed them abundantly.

- How did Israel
  - respond to God's love?

**Ezekiel 16:15 NIV**

“ ‘But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his.

- God accuses Israelites
  - idol worship..
- It gets worse

**Ezekiel 16:20 NIV**

“ ‘And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough?

- Offering kids to idols.
- Israel did this
  - literally

- figuratively.
- Teaching kids
- Allowing kids
  - worship idols
    - of this world.
- In our times,
  - don't have to
    - train kids in evil.
- We are surrounded.
  - It's everywhere.
- If we don't shelter,
  - infected by
    - virus of pollution!

- By negligence
    - parents too busy
      - our kids are
        - being sacrificed
          - to idols!
- We will have to
  - answer to God
    - for these choices!

## As with the Family, So with the Church

- As with
  - biological families
    - in the church.
- So with
  - spiritual families
    - in the church.

- Church will not
  - raise above the
    - biological family.
- Society will not
  - raise above church.

Zig Ziglar - Book - *Homemade*

The evidence is convincing

better our relationships

more effective we are

in our careers.

Struggling relationships

translated to

reduced performance

on the job.



Studying millionaires in America

(U.S. News and World Report)

"typical" millionaire

worked eight to ten hours a day

thirty years

still married

high school / college sweetheart.

A New York executive study

1365 corporate vice presidents,

87% - still married 1st spouse

92% had two-parent families.

- Family is
  - strength and foundation
    - of society.

- Got it backwards?
  - focus on work
    - destroy family...
- Focus on family
  - improve work!!!

## Statistics on Divorce

- ~ 50% 1st marriages
  - end in divorce
- 73% of 3rd marriage
  - end in divorce
- American average is
  - almost double world average.
- Since 2000

- divorce is on decline...
  - Great news...
    - how?
- Relationship getting better?
- NO....
- fewer marriages
  - more co-habit.
    - (afraid of divorce)
- Statistics show
  - those who cohabit
    - more failure
      - in marriage
      - or not.
- Having close friends
  - that get divorced

- increase chance divorce
  - by 75%!!!
  
- Our relationships
  - healthy or unhealthy
    - impact our friends.
  
- What does this show?
  - American are
    - getting worse at
      - good relationships...
  
- Look at rise
  - depression
  - anxiety
  - suicide
  
- We need help!!!

Story of little Johnny

After the dedication

of his baby brother

in church,

Little Johnny

sobbed all the way home

the back seat

of the car.

His father asked

him three times

what was wrong.

Finally the boy replied,

“That pastor said

he wanted us

brought up in

a Christian home,

but I want to

stay with you guys!”

- Funny
  - but not funny...
- Because may be true.
- What can be done!?!
- NT Church:

**Acts 2:44–47 ESV**

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- Greatest time of growth
  - greatest unity.

- lived in commune.
- American independence
- attitude of self
  - killing the family.
  - killing the church.
- Solution?
  - go back to
    - NT model.
- We need each other!
  - more time together
  - more support
    - physically
    - emotionally
    - spiritually
    - financially

- We need
  - answer to
    - Jesus final prayer
      - with all disciples:

**John 17:20–21 ESV**

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Illustration about christian unity

## Appeal....

- Come together.
  - › small groups.