

THE CHURCH FAMILY

A **MANNAHOUSE** RESOURCE



THE SPIRITUAL AND NATURAL FAMILY

The Christian Church family and the natural family have many important similarities. The Bible clearly teaches that God, who is our heavenly Father, has a perfect design for the family. In the same manner, the scriptures clearly outline God's purpose and structure for a healthy Christian Church.

We believe a biblical understanding of the natural family and the Church family are essential for a sincere Christian to fulfill God's plan for his natural and spiritual life.

On the following pages of this booklet, we will discuss the importance of the Family and the Church in detail.

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The Family

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

The basic ingredients for any family are a man and a woman who willingly make a **life-long commitment to one another**.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” Eph. 5:31 (KJV)

They each vow their intention to love and support their partner no matter what obstacles may come their way. Unfortunately, we can easily see how this marriage commitment is being tested and often broken in our present society. But the Bible says that God intended marriages to be an example of His relationship to the true Christian Church. Eph. 5:22-23.

The Church

HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM AND EARTHLY BRIDE

Similar to an earthly marriage, if you have made a commitment to allow Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your life, then the Bible says that **He is your heavenly Bridegroom and you are a part of His earthly Bride.**

The Apostle Paul, speaking to all genuine Christians, said:
“ . . . I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband.” 2 Cor. 11 :2 (RSV)

What a privilege it is for us, as Christians, to have Christ as our Bride groom, **but what a responsibility** we have in becoming His devoted Bride.

“Much is required from those to whom much is given, for their responsibility is greater.” Luke 12:48 (LB)

The Family

CHILDREN, THE FRUIT OF MARRIAGE

*“Behold, **children** are a gift for the Lord, **The fruit of the womb** is a reward.” Ps. 127:3 (NAS)*

CHILDREN NEED TRAINING

God desires all **children to be a pleasure** to their parents, but this can only happen **if they are trained** and, when needed, corrected.

*“**Train up a child** in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Prov. 22:6 (KJV)*

*“**Correct your son** and he will give you rest; yes, he will give joy to your soul.” Prov 29: 17 (MLB)*

As children are born into natural families, so God desires all people to be “born again” into His spiritual family, the Church.

The Church

CHILDREN OF GOD NEED TRAINING

No matter how old a Christian is physically, his Heavenly Father still regards him as His child. *“For now **we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.**”* Gal. 3:26 (LB)

LEADERS TRAIN CHRISTIANS

When **Jesus** left this earth, He **passed on gifts of leadership** to members of **His Church**. Under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, **certain men were given the responsibility of training and equipping Christians** in order to guide them to maturity. Eph. 4:8

*“ . . . **He gave gifts to men.** He has given some to be apostles, and others to be prophets, some to be evangelists and others to be pastors and teachers, **to equip the saints for the task of ministering** toward the building up of the body of Christ.”* Eph. 4: 11-12 (MLB)

The Family

— RESPONSIBILITIES — CARING FOR RELATIVES AND HOMES

As the human body naturally reaches out and cares for its members when they are hurt, so God designed the family to care for each other of its members.

God knows ***“that it isn’t good for man to be alone”*** Gen. 2: 18 (LB), and so consequently, ***“He gives families to the lonely”*** Ps. 68:6 (LB). **Being cared for** by other members of our families **is a blessing and a responsibility**. The Bible strongly warns anyone who will not **help** their **relatives**. ***“but anyone who won’t care for his own relatives when they need help, especially those living in his own family, has no right to say he is a Christian.”*** I Tim 5:8 (LB)

An example of how we should care for our natural families can be seen when we consider God’s plan for the Church family.

The Church

— RESPONSIBILITIES —

CARING FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS AND FACILITIES

The genuine Christian Church is not made of metal, wood, or stone. It is comprised of people who have allowed Jesus Christ to be the Lord of their lives.

True Christians will diligently care for one another and the facilities God has provided for them to use.

*“**Love each other** with brotherly affection and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy in your work but serve the Lord enthusiastically.”*
Rom. 12:10-11 (LB)

*“For God is not unfair. How can He forget your hard work for Him, or forget the way you used to **show love** for Him—and still do—**by helping His children?**”* Heb. 6:10 (LB)

The Family

UNITY — LIVING TOGETHER

Would you be satisfied, when you ordered a car from your local car dealer, if a dump truck unloaded the 10,000 individual parts of your car in a pile in front of your home? I'm sure you would not.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

As a car is more than parts, so a father, mother, and children must be **united in a proper relationship of love and care** for one another in order for them to be truly a family.

Therefore, a commitment to **consistently spend time sharing in each other's lives is essential**. The same principle of unity in the natural family is also a vital attitude within the Church.

The Church

CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

The Bible's description of the unity of the very first Christians gives us a clear example of how Christians today should relate to one another.

*“And **all who believed were together** and had all things in common; . . . And **day by day, attending the temple together** . . . Now the company of **those who believed were of one heart and soul.**” Acts 2:44, 46, 4:32 (RSV)*

The scriptures emphasize that it is more important than ever before for Christians to spend time sharing in each other's lives by **jointly participating in all areas of Church life** (e.g., worship, prayer, Bible studies, etc.).

*“**Let us not neglect our church meetings**, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of His coming back again is drawing near.” Heb. 10:25 (LB)*

The Family

PARENTS — EXAMPLES FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Someone once said, “There’s **no** such thing as **problem children, only problem parents.**” **Children will do what their parents do and not merely what they say.** Therefore, it is essential for **parents to be proper examples** for their children.

CHILDREN — OBEY YOUR PARENTS

All parents desire their children to be obedient to their instructions. But the Bible predicts **in the last days**, there will be an epidemic of **children who are disobedient to their parents.** 2 Tim. 3 :2

The millions of runaways in our society are a grim reminder that this prophecy is coming to pass, but though God predicted it, it was never His design for the family. A family that pleases the Lord will have **parents who consistently discipline in love and children who are obedient** to their parents. The Bible says: “**Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.**” Col. 3 :20 (RSV)

The Church

LEADERS — EXAMPLES FOR THEIR CONGREGATION

When we are “born again” into the family of God **we need the example and instruction of Godly leaders** to help us become mature Christians. Speaking to these leaders, the Bible says: “*not lording it over those who are under your charge but **being examples to your flock.***” 1 Pet. 5:3

CHRISTIANS RESPECT, UPHOLD, AND OBEY YOUR LEADERS

We are told in the Bible to: “. . . **recognize** the workers among you, those who are under your charge but **being examples to your flock.**”
1 Pet. 5:3 (ML)

God has given guides along the path of life to help us safely reach the goal of becoming like Jesus. We need to **obey their godly counsel.**
“**Obey your leaders** and yield to them, for they keep watch over your souls.”
Heb. 13:17 (MLB)

The Family

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING OUR FAMILIES

In countless lives it has been proven that **money does not**, of itself, **bring happiness**. The Bible even declares *“the love of money is the root of all evils.”* 1 Tim. 6: 10 (ML) Though the Word of God tells us not to love money, we do live in a world that requires us to **work to financially support our families**.

NO WORK = NO EAT

For those who would desire to shirk this responsibility, the Bible has a strong warning. **“If anyone does not want to work, then he should not eat either.”** 2 Thess. 3: 10 (ML)

The scriptures also promise that: **“Hard work brings prosperity, laying around brings poverty.”** Prov. 28: 19 (LB)

Our goal in working should not be making money, but rather **to properly meet the financial need of our family**.

The Church

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING THE CHURCH

As God ordained that we should financially care for our natural families, so He has provided a proper way of ministering to the needs of the Church family.

TITHES — SUPPORT THE LOCAL CHURCH AND ITS MINISTERS

The Bible says, "**Bring the whole tithe** (10% of your income) into the storehouse, so there may be food in My House." Mal. 3:10 (ML) It honors God when we give a tithe. "Honor the Lord by giving Him the first part of all your income." Prov. 3:9 (LB)

OFFERINGS — HELP THE NEEDY

We are encouraged to help others in need through our free will offering. This would **include missionaries** as well as the **poor**, both **at home and abroad**. **Don't give because you have to, give because you get to.** Remember, "**God loves a cheerful giver.**" 2 Cor. 9:7 (NKJV)

The Family

HOSPITALITY REACHING BEYOND THE FAMILY

Everyone needs love. God, who is Love, encourages all families to reach out and open their homes to guests.

*“Get into the habit of **inviting guests home** for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night.” Rom. 12:13 (MLB)*

“Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay for the night.” 1 Pet. 4:9 (MLB)

STRANGERS:

We should even be willing to open our homes to minister to strangers.
“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.” Heb. 13 :2 (RSV)
Giving to guests is giving to Jesus. He said: “When you did it to these my brothers you were doing it to me!” Matt. 25 :40 (MLB)

The Church

EVANGELISM — REACHING BEYOND THE CHURCH

Most of us prayed to receive Jesus after someone spoke to us about His death and resurrection. As we gratefully embraced those words of life so will many others in need, who are waiting to be told.

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US WITNESS

It is for this reason that Jesus sent the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to give the Church the power (the ability) to tell others about Christ. “. . . *but you will receive **power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you**, and in all Judea (your state) and in Samaria (every part of your country) and **to the remotest end of the earth.***” Acts 1:8 (ML)

Before Christ returns, this mighty task of world evangelism will be accomplished. “*And this **good news** of the kingdom **will be preached all over the world** to testify to all the nations, and **then the end will come.**”
Matt. 24:14 (ML)*

SUMMARY OF THE FAMILY

On the previous pages of this booklet we have studied the necessary ingredients needed to have a harmonious family. **All families need:**

1. a **husband and wife** who willingly **make** a life-long **commitment**.
2. **children** who are **trained** and when needed, **corrected** by their parents.
3. each member to **responsibly care for one another** and their homes.
4. **proper relationships and consistent time spent sharing** in each other's lives.
5. **parents** who are **good examples** and **children** who are **obedient**.
6. members who are diligent in **working to meet** their **family's financial needs**.
7. **hospitality** in opening their homes **to guests**.

In addition to these principles being applied in the natural family, they must also be working in the larger Church family.

SUMMARY OF THE CHURCH

Throughout this booklet we have examined God's plan for having a healthy local Church. We can now see why it is essential for us as genuine Christians to:

1. **obey Christ**, who is our heavenly bridegroom.
2. **receive training** and if necessary correction from our Church ministers in order to reach maturity.
3. responsibly **care for** the other **church members and facilities**.
4. **faithfully participate** in all areas of church life.
5. **respect and uphold** the **leadership** of our Church.
6. **financially support** our local Church **through tithes & offerings**.
7. **reach out to others** in need to draw them to Christ and His family.

When we as Christians are following the biblical principles set forth in this booklet, it is then that the Church will fulfill its main purpose of glorifying God. Eph. 3:21



CAMPUS LOCATIONS

PORTLAND CAMPUS

9200 NE Fremont St
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TIGARD CAMPUS

12244 SW Garden Pl
Tigard, Oregon 97223

MILL PLAIN CAMPUS

14311 SE Mill Plain Boulevard
Vancouver, Washington 98684

EUGENE CAMPUS

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