

The Community of Saints

Bible Class for 06-21-20

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1. A Calling to Home

Read Ephesians 5:21-33

Genesis 1:26-28

Matthew 19:6

What distinctive resource does a Christian marriage/family have?

God establishes it and is present within it in love and grace.

How does this offer an advantage to simply depending on love?

What additional responsibility does a Christian family have?

Read Matthew 19:14

What is a primary calling for Christian parents?

2. Some Take-Aways and Conclusions

Learning what the Bible has to say about God's design and purpose for the community of the church and of the home is beneficial. Finding specific applications can help us appreciate and implement His design. Here are a few suggestions that our study over the past weeks offer:

- a) *Today's spirituality tends to focus on the individual, not the community.* It even suggests "privatization" of faith and truth or seeing it as personal, not something that we need to or should share with others.
- b) *According to the Bible, we believe for ourselves, but we do not believe alone.* The faith which brings salvation also establishes community. The images of being "the body of Christ, the flock under the Good Shepherd, the temple built on the cornerstone of Christ" and others all share the idea that we are designed to be part of a community of faith.
- c) *The church is not an organization of people who have a common interest, but people who share a common calling to faith in Christ.* Our fellowship consists of sharing gifts given in common to all of us. While

each of us is special, God gathers us through the same ways into this community: the means of grace, His Word and the Sacraments.

- d) *God maintains the community of faith through the same means of grace He uses to gather us, because the Holy Spirit gives and strengthens faith through them.* Therefore, gathering in worship is to be centered on God and receiving His gifts through these means of grace.
- e) *The community of the church unites people who are not alike.* Satan loves to distort our differentness to be the cause of division. The distinctions people may use to create divisions, such as race, gender, or nationality, make no difference in how God values us. God loved the world, and all are saved by grace alone through the sacrifice of Jesus.
- f) *Each member of the community of saints has gifts and responsibilities.* God establishes and fills the office of ministry and of the priesthood of all believers. They are complementary, not in competition. God desires no unemployment in His church. Each member has God-given vocations to shape our lives, our homes, our communities, and society.
- g) *God creates this community for our benefit, His glory, and His mission.* God's gift of community is a powerful way of reaching the world. People are created for this kind of community, and in the church, the sin which divides and destroys is overcome.

3. **Making it Personal!**

As you consider your personal situation, in what ways might you seek to apply more completely God's design for the community of saints in:

Your family?

Your church family?

4. **A Closing prayer (From Luther's Small Catechism, Page 221)**

Holy Father, by Your Spirit You brought me to faith in Your Son and made me a member of His body, the Church. I thank You that You daily and richly forgive my many sins, giving me comfort and peace in this life and a certain hope for the life to come. Give me joy in the promises You made to me in Baptism and a ready heart to hear and keep Your Word; through Jesus Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen