

WHY THE CHURCH?

TITLE: A Place to Belong

TEXT: Ephesians 2:19- Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

God never intended the church to simply be a place we attend. **He designed it to be a spiritual family where we belong, grow in Christ, build meaningful relationships, and help others do the same.**

INTRO: THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU- One of the deepest needs in every person's life is the need to **belong**. We want to know, *“Is there a place for me? Does somebody care about me? Is there somewhere I can call home?”* That is why the church matters. When Jesus saves us, He doesn't simply forgive our sins and leave us to walk alone. **He brings us into His family.**

Ephesians 2:19 says we are no longer **“strangers and foreigners,”** but **“members of the household of God.”** A stranger is an outsider, while a household speaks of those who belong to a family.

Jesus doesn't just save us from something; He brings us into something—His family. Whether you've been here for years, you're brand-new, or you're in a season of transition, **there is a place for you.** Spiritual family gives us **a place to belong, people to grow with, and someone to stand with when life gets difficult.**

1. SPIRITUAL FAMILY GIVES US A PLACE TO BELONG

SCRIPT: Romans 12:5- So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

- Paul doesn't only say we belong to Christ; he says we belong **to one another.** Our relationship with Jesus connects us to each other.
- Belonging is more than somebody knowing your name. It is being able to say, **“There are people here who care about me. I don't have to walk through life alone.”**
- Pastor Saul was once asked how Victory Outreach grew so large so quickly. His answer was simple: **“We did everything together.”**
- They didn't only have church together—they **did life together.** They prayed together, ate together, served together, celebrated together, and stood together through difficult seasons.

Acts 2:46 shows the early church doing the same thing. They gathered in the temple and went **“from house to house.”** Their relationships went beyond the church service.

APP: As our church grows, we must intentionally make room for people.

If you see someone you don't know, introduce yourself. If someone is alone, sit with them. If someone is new, go toward them. If somebody hasn't been around, reach out. Think about a family dinner table: **when family comes home, there is a chair for them. There is room at the table.**

TRANS: Spiritual family doesn't only say, *"There is a place for you."* It also says, **"There is more in you."**

2. SPIRITUAL FAMILY HELPS US GROW

Philippians 2:22- But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.

Paul and Timothy give us a beautiful picture of spiritual family. Paul wasn't Timothy's biological father, but he became a **spiritual father** who invested in his life. Paul taught Timothy, encouraged him, corrected him, trusted him with responsibility, and prepared him to lead.

Spiritual fatherhood and motherhood are **not about controlling people; they are about developing people.** The goal is to help people mature in Christ, develop their character, discover their gifts, and fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

Then Paul tells Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:2** to take what he received and invest it into others.

- **Paul → Timothy → Faithful People → Others**

That is spiritual family: **one generation investing in the next.** Someone who comes in needing encouragement today can eventually become the person encouraging somebody else tomorrow. A spiritual son can become a spiritual father. A spiritual daughter can become a spiritual mother.

APP: Ask yourself two questions: **Who is helping me grow? Who can I help grow?**

You don't need a title to make a difference. Sometimes spiritual family begins with a simple invitation: **"Come with me. Let's grow together."**

TRANS: Spiritual family isn't only about who helps us grow. It is also about **who stands with us when life gets difficult.**

3. SPIRITUAL FAMILY STANDS TOGETHER

Galatians 6:2- Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

The word **"burdens"** speaks of something heavy or difficult to carry.

Paul doesn't say, *"Let them carry it themselves."* He says, **"Help them carry it."** There are seasons when life gets heavy. Families experience loss. Marriages face difficulties. People become discouraged. Unexpected circumstances happen.

Spiritual family says: **“You don't have to carry this by yourself.”** Imagine trying to move something extremely heavy alone. Then several people come alongside and help lift it. **The weight may not have changed, but everything feels different because you're no longer carrying it alone.**

Sometimes God removes the burden. Other times, **He gives us people who help us walk through it.**

APP: Don't only ask, **“Who's going to encourage me?”** Ask, **“Who can I encourage?”** Notice people. Make the call. Send the text. Pray with them. Invite them to lunch or small group. You don't have to fix everything. **Sometimes being family simply means showing up.**

CONCLUSION: THIS IS WHO WE ARE

This is why we use words like **spiritual father, spiritual mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister.** They describe relationships—but those words only mean something **if we live them.** Let's continue being a church that doesn't simply **have church together, but does life together.**

- We belong together.
- We grow together.
- We serve together.
- We stand together.
- And we make room for others together.

Healthy family always makes room at the table.

Don't only receive family. **Become family to somebody else.**

Our desire is that people can walk through our doors and eventually say:

“I came in as a stranger, but I found a family.”