

*We all, as believers, are part of at least two families.
At times the contrast between the two can be obvious and sharply delineated.*

TWO FAMILIES

AS IS COMMON IN SMALL GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE FAMILY OF GOD, our adult Sunday School class begins each session by sharing with each other those things uppermost on our hearts: requests for prayer, inquiries about the well-being of someone absent, specific joys experienced during the previous week.

Recently one of the members of our class requested prayer for the contractor doing work on his property. The contractor—also a member of our congregation—has been suffering for several years with a malady that often prevents him from doing his work. Days can go by without him being seen on-site; sometimes his helper shows up alone, sometimes no one. The situation can be frustrating—not just for the customer, but for the contractor: wishing only to put in a day’s work, his body won’t let him.

In our class, the customer requested prayer not that the delays would come to an end and the work be completed in a timely fashion, but that the Lord would help a brother desperately in need of healing.



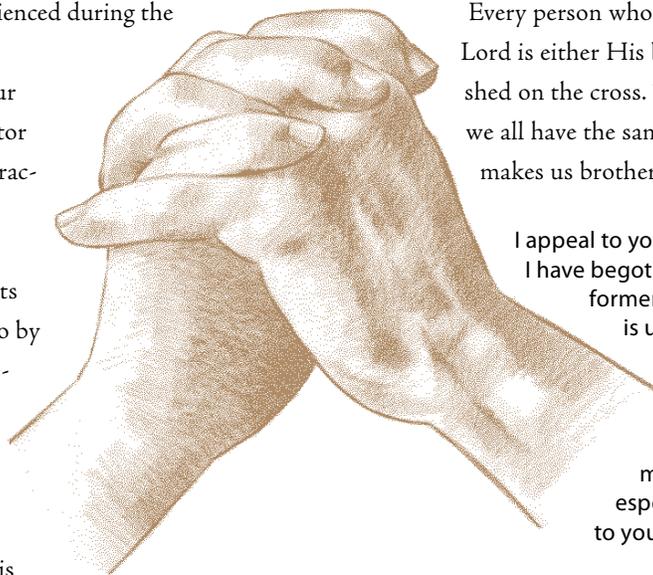
While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Matthew 12:46-50

This is one reason the church is so different from the rest of the world.

If my parents had three children—a firstborn son, followed by twins, a girl and me—then because both my sister and I are siblings to our older brother, that makes us siblings to each other. We are all three brothers and sister to the others. We are all family.

Every person who accepts Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord is either His brother or sister by blood—His blood shed on the cross. This makes all believers kin; since we all have the same Father, and the same Brother, that makes us brother or sister to each other.



I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Philemon 1:10-11,15-16

In the family of man, where *man* is preeminent, the customer would have every right to be peeved and angry over all the lost days, the repeated, chronic delays in the contractor’s work. He hired the man to do a certain amount of work, and the work wasn’t getting done.

But blood is thicker than water.

In the family of God, where *He* is preeminent, the customer’s concern is not for the swift completion of the job, but for the well-being of a brother.



“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:31-32

