

Is Family God's Design?

24 November 2020



It is impossible for God to be love (as the Bible so clearly states that God is) without having the opportunity to love others. But God is not just love. God is family – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and within this relationship, love reigns.

The Creation of Family

He is the One who created family from the beginning. Fatherhood and family are God's design. Fatherhood derives its identity from God the Father. Let's consider verses 14 and 15 in Ephesians (chapter 3) in both the New International Version (NIV) and the Wycliffe (WYC) translations:

- *"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name."* (NIV) The Greek word for family (patria) is derived from the Greek word for father (pater).
- *"For grace of this thing I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom each fatherhood in heavens and in earth is named..."* (WYC)

From creation, family has been the focus of all God has done and is doing. God gave man and woman the mandate to multiply and fill the earth. Building and being family has been their mandate from the beginning. God's design was to create one big family on earth. One which would walk with Him as He walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and which would live in loving relationship with Himself and one another.

From creation, family has been the focus of all God has done and is doing.

Only within the context of family is it possible to fulfil this mandate: a man and a woman, able to reproduce after themselves. According to God's design, this would be a husband and a wife, joined together in holy matrimony, who together have children and form a family. *"Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring ... "* (Malachi 2:15, NIV).

Christian Family: The Cornerstone of Human Society

Family is the perfect structure on which to build human society. It alone assures stability to parents and children.

1. Strong Role Models

Healthy family provides the next generation with strong role models who represent what it means to be male and female.

2. Committed, Loving Parents

The best structure for children to mature in is that of a loving father and mother who live in an enduring, loving relationship. A strong society is built upon strong families. It is therefore not surprising that in both the Old and New Testament, God reveals Himself as Father. Those who are called by Him and who follow and believe in Him, He calls His children. They are a Christian family!

3. The Bond of Unity

In John 17, Jesus prays for His disciples and all who will join His family through their testimony. He pleads with His Father that they will be one, just as He is one with His Father, "I in them and You in Me". In effect, Jesus is asking His Father to allow all His children into the loving sacredness of the Trinitarian relationship.

4. Intimate, Selfless Relationships

One family bound together in loving unity with the Father, through the selfless sacrifice of the beloved Son, who freely gave His life in death to make this possible for all who believe! This is not a relationship with a distant God, who watches from afar. It is an intimate relationship – so intimate that we may call Him our Abba, Papa and Daddy. He has bestowed His love on us and drawn us into the embrace of His family.

Godly Marriage and Family Under Attack

Secular liberal society has worked hard to change the concept of family as the foundation stone on which society is built. Through subtle but relentless propaganda over the last 60 years, the very concept of family has been altered. It is no longer a household led by a husband and father who provides, cherishes and protects those entrusted to him. It started with a subversive attack on this male leadership and headship within family, followed by a redefinition of the nuclear family.

Biblical, Judeo-Christian values and teachings on family and child-raising are increasingly considered outdated, detrimental and belligerent to society. Societies that were built on Judeo-Christian foundations are now working overtime to undermine and replace these. The world is increasingly becoming hostile to those who belong to Christ's family. Yet this is nothing new and should not surprise the faithful. I believe that this is part of the birth pains prior to His return that Jesus warned His followers about.

Being part of a church ... is such a powerful force of good in this world.

Christian Family is of Another World

But the world is not our home; we are citizens of another kingdom, a kingdom that is not of this world. A kingdom with foundations set in eternity past, foundations of love, commitment, self-sacrifice and worship. As members of this kingdom and of Christ's family, we will do well to remember who we are and to Whom we belong.

Revealing the Father's Love to The Lost

Not only so, but the loving unity that only the faithful members of the Lord's family enjoy with the Trinitarian God and with each other is a powerful tool in God's hand to confront the godless world into which He sent His one and only Son. Being part of a church family (not a building, structure or organisational institution) of vibrant, Spirit-led believers, united in love for their Lord and each other, as part of God's intended design, is such a powerful force for good in this world. It clearly reveals the Father's love to people lost in worldliness, sin, depravity, loneliness and hopelessness. As God's children, we are the light of the world, the salt of the earth.

May this be a clarion call to shine that light and spread wide the salt of the Gospel, as it is through the family of the Church that the Lord has chosen to communicate the Good News of the Gospel. We are not only to speak and proclaim it, but also to demonstrate the loving family relationship we enjoy with one another. As followers of Jesus and members of God's household, we are truly family!
