

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of June 24, 2018

THEME: "Our Church Family"

BODY OF BELIEVERS

Sunday Read Ephesians 4:4-16

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called into one hope of your calling."

Every local church that is a true defender of the faith is a small part of the family of God and could be well described as our immediate church family, a small body of believers. To refer to a church as a body is a good metaphor in that we can easily identify with one body being made up of many important parts, all of which are essential for the body to be in good working order. So it is with a local church! Yes, there are parts of the body that are more visible than others just as our human bodies, but without the inner parts, the body would not function very well, if at all. When any part of a body is not working well, the body is at a handicap; other parts have to pick up the slack, and the overuse may lead to less efficiency. Let us also take note that no part of the body is isolated. Many people have said that they can worship alone without attending a church. That may be true, but the isolation means they are doing the church no good when it is trying to accomplish things that can be done only by our attachment to each other. Can a hand pick up an object without being attached to the arm that is attached to the body and receiving waves from the brain in our head on our bodies? That brings up a very important point that is emphasized several times in Scripture such as this in Ephesians 5:23: *"Even as Christ is the Head of the church: and the Savior of the body."*

SPIRIT LED

Monday Read I Corinthians 12:12-18

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him."

It is God who decides where His people should go to church! This is why true Christians should pray fervently about where they should go to church, and why people in a church should be in prayer about those whom God would add to their assembly of believers. Jesus, as Head of the Church, will have the Holy Spirit lead people to the church of His choosing; this means that church membership is not so much Christians picking a church they would like to be part of as it is Christians being led by the Spirit to the local church where God has chosen for them. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift. Every church needs people with gifts. Only God knows the local church which has the need for people with certain gifts at any given time; and the Holy Spirit will lead those believers to the church where there is a need for those very gifts. This means that the church needs the gifts of the people whom God was pleased to lead them to the church of His choice for them. What a blessing to know that it is Jesus who builds our churches, just as He promised in that great statement in Matthew 16:18: *"I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."* Oh yes, Satan will try, but with Christ as our Head, he will not prevail, and we will win!

SPIRIT-SEALED

Tuesday Read Ephesians 1:12-13

"That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." A seal in the American system of justice gives proof that a document or transaction is legal. The stamp of a notary public is a seal of approval that the law has been satisfied. The birth of an individual into the family of God upon his or her accepting Christ as personal Savior is sealed by the Holy Spirit on the basis of the fact the Jesus has satisfied God's holy law enabling His followers to be part of God's eternal family. That is

not a seal on a document, but it does mean a person's name is in the registry in heaven known as the Lamb's Book of Life. That seal of the Spirit gives a believer the legal right to be a citizen of heaven, forever!

EDIFICATION

Wednesday Read I Thessalonians 5:11-18

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another." God places every believer into a local church for their edification and for the edification of others in that local assembly. God does not expect anyone to go at it alone. When a person receives Christ, he or she now has a church home and a special family of believers of which they are part. Each person is a vital and valuable part of the church family. The most basic expectation of the Lord Jesus, who is the Head of the family of believers in any local assembly that is a true defender of the faith, is that all show love for others. We are told that in John 13:35: *"By this shall all men know ye are my disciples because of your love for each other."* That is edification. That love for others means we should be encouragers, and not condemners. A sneaky trick of the enemy of our souls is to get one believer to put down another. We all have faults: sinners saved by the grace of God. A family of believers should not delight our enemy by focusing on the faults of fellow believers, but on their strengths. If a fault is noticeable, one believer should approach that individual alone, not after pointing it out to others. Jesus ordered us to do that in Matthew 18:15: *"Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."* That edifies!

EXHORTATION

Thursday Read Hebrews 10:22-25

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, especially as you see the day approaching." Here we see that believers, in addition to edifying other believers, are to exhort one another. This implies that we all have some talent that would be useful to the ministry of the local church. Some are talented in music; others in teaching and preaching. Some have gifts of hospitality; some have leadership capabilities and are good at organizing. Some are skilled craftsmen where there are all kinds of needs in the operation of a local church. The command to exhort one another means that we should encourage others to use their talents in working together as a body of believers to honor our Savior. Many people are reluctant to pitch in because of the fear of failure; these people need the exhortation of others to try it! One kind word of encouragement could result in a person becoming useful for God!

INTERCESSION

Friday Read James 5:13-16

"Pray one for another." The most powerful weapon in spiritual war against the rulers of the darkness of this world is prayer! Prayer brings God into the life of a fellow believer with all His power! Praying for others is not a option; it is an order. So many lives have been mightily blessed because others prayed. This is not an exaggeration! Never can a believer properly say that there is nothing they can do to help a person in a tough situation; they can pray. Now intercession as a labor of love for others is compulsory, but we are not limited to that. In Matthew 7:7, Jesus points out that it is simply the first step in living the Christian life: *"Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."* Prayer always should be followed by action! Lending a hand should follow our prayers. We must seek ways in which we can help, and then take action.

EVANGELIZATION

Saturday Read Colossians 4:1-5

"Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ." One of the most thrilling parts of the life of a believer is to engage in conversation with others about our Lord and Savior, the most important human who ever lived. The most exciting experience in life is to be in a personal relationship with the Son of God and the

Savior of the world, and the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. Why would a believer not want to share this high privilege with others? It is what Jesus called witnessing in His last command before leaving to return to His Father's house in heaven recorded in Acts 1:8: "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me...*" We should be praying for opportunities to share our faith with others, and then we should be alert to those God-given opportunities. Reaching a soul with the truth of God and the Savior of the world is by far the most thrilling and memorable experience in life. It is engaging in the work of God on His planet earth today!