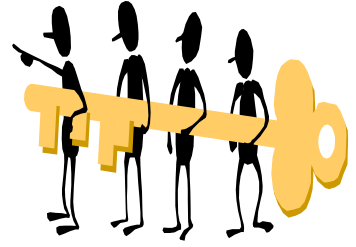


# Being a Family: Members, Devoted, Honor

study #2



## **BODY LANGUAGE: How God's People Should Treat One Another**

Francis Schaeffer wrote: "Salvation is individual, but not individualistic. God's people are called together in community." When the average person becomes a Christian, he or she is not necessarily thinking "horizontally" - that they will be adopted into a new family of people. Instead, they are usually thinking "vertically" - that is, about their new-found relationship with God. But the Kingdom of God is like a family, and God is creating a new community here on earth among those who have become His followers.

How do you think it might have felt to have been one of the 12 disciples of Jesus? What would have been some of the "high points" of travelling around with that group and experiencing life together with them? What bonded them together?

Read **Acts 2:42-47** and list below all the characteristics you can find about this "new community" as it began forming in the early days of the church:

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What was it like when you first came to Christ? Did you have an easy transition into a local body of believers, or were you a "lone ranger" Christian for a time?

When you think of "fellowship" with other Christians, give two or three examples of real, authentic experiences of community in your life. When did it mean the most to you? What brought you close to others? How did God use other believers to help you in some way?

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"The genius of Christianity is that it makes possible ongoing fellowship between people who could not otherwise tolerate, let alone enjoy one another."

John White

<sup>5</sup> ... in Christ we who are many form one body, and **each member belongs to all the others**. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. <sup>7</sup> If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

<sup>9</sup> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> **Be devoted to one another** in brotherly love. **Honor one another** above yourselves. <sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup> **Live in harmony with one another**. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 12:5-16

### **members...**

meaning: "a limb, a part of the human body" (see 1 Cor 12:25, Eph 4:25)

What difference does it make in the life of a Christian if they understand this concept or not?

### **be devoted to...**

meaning: (Greek - *philostorge*) "tender, affectionate love"

How is it possible to "be devoted" to someone if they're "not your type"? Have you ever become close to a brother or sister in Christ, when at first you couldn't see anything in common?

### **honor...**

meaning: (Greek - *timae*) "to enhance someone's reputation"

Name some occasions when we naturally honor people?

When in your life did you feel especially honored?

Why do you think Paul exhorts us to "honor one another"?

### **live in harmony**

meaning: "like-minded, unified, agreed together"

Anyone who's been a part of a family knows that this is no easy task! Does this passage mean that we must think exactly the same way about everything? Use the following passages to formulate your answer: Philippians 3:2-3, Romans 12:18, Philippians 2:1-4.