

# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

## *The Church is a Family that Cares for One Another*

I Corinthians 12:20-26

Over the next five Sundays we will be looking at what the Church is, or is supposed to be. This will not be an exhaustive study, as the Church is much more than we can consider in just five lessons. We will, however, focus on the nature of the as a family, and the attitudes and attributes that the New Testament ascribes to those family relationships that ought to exist within each local congregation.

Jesus indicated to His disciples that all men would identify them as belonging to Him because of the *abnormal* and *supernatural* love they had for one another, a love that can best be described as *devotion* to one another. (John 13:35; Romans 12:10)

### An Interesting Word Study: care (μεριμνῶσιν)

- A. Old Testament LXX: used 7 times  
*Ex 5:9 labor, consider*    *2 Sam 7:10 distracted, restless*  
*Psalms 37:19 full of anxiety*    *Prov 14:23 hard work*  
*Ezek 16:42 I shall be at rest and not angry*
- B. New Testament: used 19 times  
**Always negative when referenced to self**—*Mt 6:25, 27, 28, 31*  
*Mt 10:19 take no thought what you will say*  
*Lk 10:41 Martha, Martha, you are worried about so many things*  
*I Co 7:32 the single person is free from concern (re a spouse's needs)*  
*Phil 4:6 be anxious for nothing*  
**But used affirmatively when referenced to others**—  
*I Co 12:25 have the same care for one another*  
*Phil 2:20 no one like him who takes a genuine interest in your welfare*
- C. Conclusion
1. Definition: to give thought an attention to solutions, to turn a thing over and over in one's mind, to worry, to be thoughtful and concerned about the outcome, anxious, concerned, to give attention to as in hard work, to care for.
  2. Paradigm shift (My thoughts are not your thoughts and My ways are not your ways):
    - a. our tendency in the natural self is to be worried about ourselves and our problems and future—this we are instructed not to do but to trust God
    - B. we seldom give much careful attention to the concerns and problems of others—this we are told should occupy our attention in the family of God

But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, **so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.** I Cor 12: 20-26 NASB

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (Joh 13:35 NASB)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; (Rom 12:10 NASB)

### A Personal Challenge

Who, in this congregation, would you like to get to know better with a view toward taking a genuine interest in their welfare?

