



St. John's Congregational Church

40 days of Prayer & Fasting

April 7 - May 16

Devotional - Week 2

One Family Under God

If I know what's good for me, I must always remember the date of August 5th, 2005, for on this date I was joined in Holy Matrimony with my lovely bride. As the years progress it may become harder and harder to remember the actual date, but I am certain that I will never have a problem remembering the day itself. The events of that day are stamped into my mind as vibrantly, and vividly as any photograph. Amidst all of that joy, the moment that I remember most fondly is when Nelly recited her vows. With tears in her eyes and an unparalleled sincerity in her heart, Nelly went on to tell me how she pledged to be mine, to be my wife, my love, and forever. She was able to artfully use scripture to help her express her feelings as she borrowed from Ruth's famous speech to Naomi:

"Where you go I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God..." Ruth 1:16

These powerful words helped Nelly express her desire to form a family with me. On that day our family was born out of our pledge to sacrifice our selfish desires for the benefit of our union. I believe that God's call to us as members of the body of Christ are to operate with this same sort of sacrifice, and this same sort of commitment to one another, the commitment to building family. Surely God is not calling us to enter into Holy Matrimony with everyone in the Church, but God is asking that we place the needs, wants and desires of our brothers and sisters before our own, so that we can operate as one. Jesus makes this clear as he prays for all of us in John 17. His clearest desire in this prayer is that all who follow Him would become one. We are called to worship as a family, to sacrifice our own desires for the benefit of our spiritual bond as brothers and sisters in Christ. We must be able to see beyond our differences in favor of oneness under God. This week ask God to help show you what is hindering you from becoming an even more committed member of this family of God and what you can do to foster the love that is necessary for our family to exist.

Daily Prayer

Father God, giver and sustainer of life, help us to see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and help us even more to treat one another with the love that family deserves and requires. Shape our actions and attitudes so that we will promote the blessed spiritual family that you have called us to be. In the matchless and marvelous name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Daily Scripture Meditations

Monday:

John 17: The Family's Call to Oneness

Tuesday:

Ruth 1 and 2: A Mixed Family's Journey, Part I

Wednesday:

Ruth 3 and 4: A Mixed Family's Journey, Part II

Thursday:

Luke 15:11 – 32: A Family Reunited

Friday:

Revelation 7:9 - 17: The Great Family Reunion