

The Power of Family

Hurting Christians are often heard to say, “I just do not know what people do who do not have church family.” They say this because they are experiencing the wonderful comfort of having brothers and sisters come to offer whatever help they may be able to give in a time of need. The hugs, expressions of concern and prayers at such a time sustain in ways beyond the imagination.

Paul’s first letter to the struggling church at Thessalonica is filled with reminders of the relationships we have in God’s family. They were being tormented, but Paul wanted them to focus on family. He thought of them as his brothers in Christ and wrote, “Knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God” (1:4; 2:1). He pictured his own approach to them as being with the gentleness of a mother nursing her child (2:7).

He also approached them as a caring father urging his child on to better living. “You are our witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children” (2:10-11).

His concern for the Thessalonians reached such an intensity that he “sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith” (3:2). The entire statement overflows with affection, especially his description of Timothy as “our brother.”

Let us resolve to strengthen one another in the same way loving families do. Let no opportunity to be with the brethren in Bible study, worship or prayer pass without taking full advantage of it. Lean on your brothers and sisters in time of need. Ask for their prayers. Be ready to offer them a listening ear and fervent prayers when life tumbles in on them. In Christ, we know the ultimate power of family.

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