



LESSON 7: AS YOU GROW YOU'LL NEED FRIENDS

CHURCH

Imagine, if you can, a newborn baby being dropped into a sterile bed as soon as he's born; then left to grow alone. Gowned but silent nurses would change him when necessary or prop a bottle within his reach; but there would be no talking, no smiling, no holding. He wouldn't go home to a family. There would be no grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins to admire him. He'd be given the best physical care: food, clean surroundings, and medical check-ups. But no companionship or communication with other humans.

It's impossible to believe that such an infant could grow into a balanced adult. In fact, it's not difficult to wonder if he'd survive at all. To grow properly, babies need loving companionship and caring, as well as food and warmth.

Christians need loving companionship too; and God plans that His children should enjoy fellowship together.

What attitude did Jesus say Christians should have for each other? John 13:34-35

If Christians love each other, what will be the result? John 17:21

Love will unite Christians so they can present a solid witness of love to the world and by this love, the world will see Jesus.

What does the Psalmist say about Christian unity? Psalm 133:1

How else will Christians relate to each other? Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5

Submission doesn't mean you'll become a doormat, but it means you'll build up the other person rather than yourself.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11 and write what it says about the relationship Christians should have with each other.

The New International Version of the bible translates this verse: "Encourage one another and build each other up." Don't you like that? Christians are to love, comfort, encourage and help each other.

What else are they to do together? Hebrews 10:24-25

What did Jesus promise to even small groups of believers? Matthew 18:20

The Bible makes it plain that Christians need to meet together, so you'll want to go to church and to other gatherings of Christians because you'll be encouraged and strengthened by worshipping with others. And you can know that Jesus will be among you because He promised to be.

But how can you find the right church or group of Christians? The Bible says that His people living in the last days will have two characteristics.

8. What are these characteristics? Revelation 12:17 (last part)

a) _____

b) _____

Finding a group with these two characteristics may take some time. You will need to continue your own study of the Bible so you will know all God's commandments and so your relationship with Jesus will grow; but basically, you should look for Christians who obey all God's commandments and have a testimony about Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

For another interesting description of Christians as a group, read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

To what does Paul compare the church? 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Paul compares the church to a body. The body has many parts - arms, legs, ears, eyes, mouth, etc. Each organ has a different function, but each part is important, no matter how small. So church members are different - each has a different gift or ability, but each is important to the whole.

10. But who is the Head of the Church? Ephesians 5:23

(For further reading: Colossians 1:18)

Christ is the head of the body of believers and you must look to Him for a perfect example of how to live. If you look at how others live (even church members) you may stumble because they stumble. The church is not a collection of perfect people, but a group of growing people. Enjoy fellowship with other growing Christians but keep your eyes on Christ for your standard of living.

What is the purpose of the various “gifts” or talents in the church? Ephesians 4:11-13

The many talents found in God’s church are for one purpose; to help each member grow “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” “Fullness” can also be translated to “full-grown” Christians and you will be. Your association with other people in the church can help you reach your ideal.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Are there some specific ways you can demonstrate love to other Christians? Write down some of the ideas that come to your mind.

TO MEMORISE

Matthew 18:20
John 13:34