

## **Finding A Place To Grow Up Ephesians**

### **Introduction:**

1. I remember when my boys were born here in Daytona. What an incredible, life-changing event! After my boys were born, we took them home and provided them with a home and a family to grow up and mature in. It wasn't enough for them to simply be born – they needed a family!
2. Likewise, it is not enough to simply be saved and born into God's family. We need a spiritual home and a spiritual family here on earth.
3. This is precisely the reason why many Christians struggle in following Christ after they get saved. They never get connected to a spiritual family. They are like spiritual orphans.
  - **Illustration:** When we say that a person is homeless, what does this mean? The person has nowhere to really belong. There are many believers who are spiritually homeless.
4. The Bible teaches that, once you are saved, you become part of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27
  - This text goes on to use this analogy by saying that some of us may be like an eye, some an ear, some a foot, etc. What is the point? You were created in Christ to work in conjunction with other members of the body of Christ.
  - What would happen if a part of your physical body were severed from the rest of your body? Separated from the life's blood of the body, it would shrivel and die.
5. The Bible teaches that every believer needs a church family. The apostle Paul wrote to the local church of Ephesus, a church like CrossRoads. In the book of Ephesians, God explains to us why it is so vital that every believer have a church family.

### **First, a church family identifies you as a believer.**

1. Notice what Paul says about these members of this local church (1:1; 2:1, 5, 13; 4:4-6). Have you noticed, when Paul wanted to talk to believers, he wrote to churches?
2. Please understand, I am not saying you **become** a Christian by joining a church. I am not saying that being a church member **makes** you a Christian. It absolutely does not.
3. But it is a **mark** of a believer. For example, being a member of a baseball team identifies you as a baseball player. If you are a member of a platoon, what are you? A soldier. If you proclaim to be a college student, you are most likely a member of a college. If you are a member of a hive, what are you? A bee!
  - In the Bible, believers have some distinguishing characteristics, and one of those is that they are part of a local church.
4. Being a member of a Bible-believing church identifies you to others as a Christian – a believer on Jesus Christ.

- **Illustration:** I've talked to people who claim to know the Lord, and I will ask them what church they go to. They respond, "I don't go to church." It causes me to scratch my head and wonder.
5. Being a member of a local church is a testimony to others of what you are.

**Second, a church family is what you were created for in Christ. 2:19-22**

1. God told Adam, "*It is not good that the man should be alone.*" And Adam was in the Garden of Eden, which was a perfect, sinless environment!
2. God did not make you to go at it alone, physically **or** spiritually.
3. God does not create a person in Christ to be a spiritual hermit who is isolated from other believers and deprived of fellowship. Ephesians 2:19-22
  - There are several word pictures given for the body of Christ in this text.
  - "*fellowcitizens with the saints,*" "*household,*" "*together groweth,*" "*buildded together*"
4. It pictures the church as a building with Jesus as the cornerstone.
  - You are not a brick lying all alone. You are a brick that is part of a much bigger structure.
  - **Illustration:** If I have a single, solitary brick, what can I build? But if I have one, and you have one, etc., now we are on our way to really building something.
  - This is God's plan. You are a brick next to another brick, next to another brick... side by side, **together!**

**Third, a church family helps you to grow spiritually.**

1. God's plan for every one of His children is that each one grow stronger and healthier spiritually.
2. A person may say, "Sure I want to grow, but I'll just sit down at home and read my Bible and pray. I can grow on my own." This is not what the Bible teaches.
3. Look at Ephesians 4:15 and notice the words "*grow up.*" Notice the phrase in verse 16, "*the whole body.*" It is evident from this passage that growth takes place as the body works together.
4. The Bible is essential to our spiritual growth, but we grow in Christ faster and stronger by learning from each other and being accountable to each other.
5. As you establish relationships with other imperfect (maybe even irritating) people, you learn lessons about love, forgiveness, forbearance, mercy, kindness, and the list goes on and on. The Holy Spirit teaches us as we relate to each other.
6. If you join and get connected to a church family, you will have times of hurt and disappointment. But that is just part of being in a family.
7. As you learn to forgive and love people, you will find yourself growing and developing in the fruit of the Spirit.

**Fourth, a church family allows you to be a contributing player on God's team.**

1. Look at Ephesians 4:11-12. If you are saved, God has gifted you to serve in the body of Christ. There is a participating role for you to fulfill on the team.
2. Our job, as leadership, is to help you discover where you fit on the team, equip you to serve, and then turn you loose and let you do it!
3. How does Christ minister here on planet earth? He works through people – specifically, His body, the church! Are you a contributing player on God's team? You should be! 2:10

**Fifth, a church family provides you with spiritual protection.**

1. No Christian is above temptation (4:27, 30). We are capable in our flesh of doing any kind of sin. God knows this and has put in place a way of keeping each other accountable, and helping to keep each other on track. God's way is the local church. 5:21
2. Do you know why our small groups are so important? Because they provide you with a group of people that love and care about you. The idea of the word "fellowship" is that we are involved in each other's lives.
3. Satan loves it when believers are severed from the life of a local church. Why is this? Because you are in isolation. Nobody is watching your back, so to speak. Satan knows you are vulnerable to his fiery darts. 6:11, 16

**In Conclusion:**

1. It is one thing to attend a local church. But when you become a member, you have taken it to another level of commitment, which will mean more growth for you. No longer are you on the bench or in the bleachers. You are on the field, contributing!
2. You say, "But I'm waiting until I find the perfect church." Guess what, you will never find it until you get to heaven! Until then, we are soldiers in God's army, fighting in enemy territory, and we need each other!
3. I think we all see clearly from the Bible that we all need a church family, a church home.