

## “Built Together Part 3 - Our Nature” (9-10-23)

A bonded community

**Series Review: Eph. 2:22** - In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**Built Together:** Greek Verb - this is about action. Participate in the building, be a part of it!

**Last Week Review: Our Heart** - a Worshipping Community (sacrificial, transformational, unifying)

**Today: Our Nature** - A Bonded Community

There are several ways that the Bible describes the nature of the Church . . .

### 1) Body

#### **Romans 12:4-5 (ESV)**

(4) For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, (5) so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

**Note:** We are each unique, and yet designed to be interconnected - essential for the health of the whole!

Paul uses this terminology again in letters to the Ephesian & Corinthian churches . . .

#### **1 Corinthians 12:14-17 (ESV)**

(14) For the body does not consist of one member but of many. (15) If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. (16) And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. (17) If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

**Note:** United in our diversity. United in Christ (no compromise or division). Diverse in backgrounds, gifting, & functions.

#### **1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (ESV)**

(26) If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (27) Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

**Note:** What happens to one, happens to all - therefore we celebrate & suffer together!

- We are a body – not a business, not a club or team, not a social gathering, not a political party.
- We are an organism – not an organization!

### 2) Building

#### **Ephesians 2:22 (ESV)**

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

#### **Ephesians 2:19-21 (ESV)**

(19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, (21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

**Note:** We are a building, knit together on the firm foundation of Christ. The building terms used to describe us here and throughout the NT are both a house and a temple where God’s spirit dwells.

Let's briefly explore these 2 terms - **House** and **Temple** using 2 key Greek words . . .

### **Acts 2:42, 46-47 (NKJV)**

(42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . (46) So continuing daily with one accord in the **temple**, and breaking bread from **house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the **church** daily those who were being saved.

- **Temple - Ekklesia** (Church): A called-out assembly or congregation. A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place. **Notice** (vs. 46): Gathered daily in the temple - united.
- **House - Koinonia** (Fellowship): association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse, intimacy. **Notice** (vs. 46): Gathered in homes - breaking bread & prayer.

## **3) Family**

### **Romans 12:10 (ESV)**

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

### **1 Peter 3:8 (ESV)**

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

**Note:** We operate on the basis of relationships. Affection, honor, sympathy, tender hearts, humble minds!

**The Family of God:** We are the bride of Christ & children of God. So, we treat each other as fathers & mothers, brothers & sisters, etc.

### **1 Timothy 5:1-3 (ESV)**

(1) Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, (2) older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. (3) Honor widows who are truly widows.

### **1 Thessalonians 2:7 (ESV)**

(7) But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children

### **1 Corinthians 4:14-15 (ESV)**

(14) I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. (15) For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**Note:** We love, nurture, and even correct one another on the basis of a loving, family relationship.

## **4) Flock**

### **John 10:11, 14-15 (ESV)**

(11) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep . . . (14) I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

**Note:** Jesus is the Good Shepherd - we are his sheep!

Jesus assigns shepherds under him to tend his sheep as well . . .

**John 21:15-16 (ESV)**

(15) When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” (16) He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”

**Note:** Peter is being restored by Jesus, and given a new role. Feed lambs, and tend sheep - an act of love, based on Jesus’ grace and tender guidance as the chief shepherd.

**1 Peter 5:1-4 (ESV)**

(1) So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: (2) shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; (3) not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

**Note:** This role is important, not for the benefit of the shepherd, but for the nurture & care of the sheep.

- Elders, pastors, and overseers are in the church for the protection and nurture of the flock.
- At Grace Chapel, we are cared for & led by shepherds. Servant-leaders who allow themselves to be led

**Conclusion:** We need to understand our nature as the church and live out this truth. It gives us clear direction on how to live in relation to our Father in heaven, and with one another.

**Our Nature:** We are an interconnected **body**, a **building** that needs the structure and support of constant gathering, a **family** that gives us a place of love and relationship, a **flock** that receives care, nurture, and support from one another and ultimately from the Good Shepherd.