

Sister, let me wipe your tears
Brother, let me bear your fears
Come on, every daughter, every son
Let us walk in love for we are one

Though we walk a long and broken road
We are here to bear each other's load
And forgive as You've forgiven us
Let us walk in love for we are one

There's a love that conquers all divides
There's a love that paid the greatest price
For the battle over death is won
Now alive in Christ we live as one

Chorus

*We are one in the Father's love
We of every tribe and every tongue
We are found in the risen Son
We are bound together by His blood
Let us walk in love for we are one
We are one*

On the day You come to call us home
With the multitude before the throne
Now with all the saints who've overcome
For eternity we'll sing as one

By Alanna Glover & Claire Williams (Emu Music)

XX Church Notices XX

Prayer meeting with Communion - Tuesday
13th July, 7.30pm at The Community Centre.
Please let us know if you are able to come.

Sunday September 5th - Croftlands Community Church will be back in the flesh!! Meeting at the Community Centre temporarily, our morning worship at 10.30 will reconvene with provision for our children and young children. We look forward to welcoming you back



Happy Birthday Edith
(11th July)
God Bless You!

Almighty God, thank you that although you are so awesome and all powerful we can call you Father! You pour your love into our lives and bring us into your family as dearly loved children. Thank you that you are not a distant father, but you know each one of us completely and you care about our needs and struggles. As children reflect the mannerisms and likeness of their earthly parents, may we reflect your likeness as we focus our worship on you today.

We ask that you would be especially close to those who are hurting, may they tangibly experience your comfort today.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.



Throughout our lives, we may be part of many different families.

Here are some photos of some of the lovely families in Croftlands church. Some people found this difficult because they are part of so many families! I love that we had one of our youth family sent in.



Did you know that you have been invited to join the biggest and best family ever? The family of God!

We are going to think a bit more about the family of God today by thinking about what Paul writes in the book of Ephesians and Romans in the bible.



Here are just a few verses to get us started.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." . Ephesians 4:32

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10

"We win by
kindness.
We conquer by
forgiveness."

—FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON

"In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will" Ephesians 1:5

The city of Ephesus was pretty big! Lots of different types of people lived there, and they worshipped the Greek and Roman gods. Some of you may be able to name a few of those gods if you have read the Percy Jackson books.

Paul had lived in the city for a number of years and in that time he had been doing God's work; he had been welcoming huge numbers of people into the family of God. You can find out more about how Paul ended up in Ephesus by reading **Acts Chapter 19**.

Paul in Ephesus

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.

⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues^[b] and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

¹¹ God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” ¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁷ When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸ Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. ¹⁹ A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.^[c] ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

²¹ After all this had happened, Paul decided^[d] to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” ²² He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

The Riot in Ephesus

²³ About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. ²⁵ He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. ²⁶ And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. ²⁷ There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”



Goddess Artemis of The Ephesians

²⁸ When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹ Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theatre together. ³⁰ Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³¹ Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theatre.

³² The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³³ The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defence before the people. ³⁴ But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

³⁵ The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Fellow Ephesians, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁶ Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁸ If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁹ If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰ As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” ⁴¹ After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Temple of Artemis



Years later, in a Roman prison Paul wrote a letter to his Christian family in Ephesus. He told them that God had always planned to have a large family made up of restored people . God saw that his masterpiece of creation - people - were so consumed by sin that they were spiritually dead. They had no way back to God, the gap created by sin was just too big! It looked pretty bad for people, but God had a salvation plan, through the death of Jesus on the cross every person that ever lived- or will live- is given the chance to be adopted into the family of God. Jesus’ death covers our worst sins, this is the grace of God. God offers us a permanent place in his family where we are unconditionally loved! That means that God's love for us is not based on anything we do. That is pretty awesome because I know that there is no way I could live a perfect, sinless life. And even though I still sin, I know that I am part of the family of God.

So how did Paul bring so many people, in such a place as Ephesus, into the family of God? Did he stand in front of the marketplace and tell them that they were wrong, that he knew better, that the way they were living was bad? Well I don't think so. **In his letter to the Ephesians , Paul explains that the work of the Holy Spirit in the family of God should cause changes in us and our behaviour.**

- ♦ Instead of anger we should create peace
- ♦ Instead of lying we should tell the truth
- ♦ Instead of stealing we should be generous
- ♦ Instead of gossiping about people we should build them up
- ♦ Instead of seeking revenge we should forgive.

Now we are not all very good at all of these things, or even one of them sometimes, but in everything we do -including welcoming people into the family of God- we should aim to treat people in a way that the Holy Spirit wants us to.

In Romans, Paul tells us that just as God accepted us, we should accept others. Now here Paul was talking about Christians accepting Jews and gentiles, both groups of people very different from the Christians in what they believed, and how they lived their lives; people the early Christians might have found it difficult to like and get on with. I am sure there are many people that we may find it difficult to like or understand today. **When we welcome these people into the church they are exposed not only to the gospel, but also to the working of the Holy Spirit.**

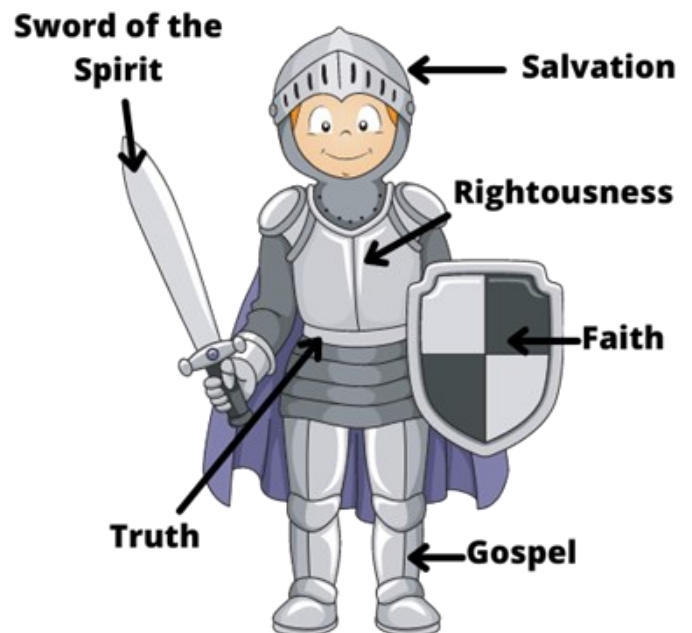
It is the Holy Spirit that convicts people of their need for salvation and leads to them becoming part of the family of God. So, if we want to expand this family then we need to accept people into the church that we may not think deserve it, that may not yet have accepted Christ as their saviour, or who are very different from us. The end result is that although the members of this wonderful family are united in Christ they tend to be very different from one another. This sounds tough. We like to surround ourselves with people like us. It is what we do, but it is not what God wants us to do. We always have a choice to accept people where they are in their life, or to turn away from them.

United
not
Uniformed

When we accept people in love, we not only all get along but more importantly, we give glory to God. That is the ultimate purpose of accepting others, not proving that you are better, or know more, or are more mature in your relationship with God, but to glorify God.



This task of accepting others into the family of God can leave us facing many difficult situations, ideas and beliefs. We can come face-to-face with people who revel in their sin, who love their sinfulness. Paul knew this and addresses it in Ephesians by telling us that to do this important work we need to wear the armour of God. We cannot do this alone, we need the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, the word of God and the gospel. Find out more about the armour of God in [Ephesians 6:10-17](#) God gave us everything we need to protect ourselves and grow His family, we do not need to be fearful of people who are different.



So, how should we treat other Christians in the church who are different to us, or those in contact with the church that are not yet Christians, or those who have nothing to do with the church and are very different? God wants us to treat them all with acceptance and love, with an open invitation into the family of God, whilst trusting the tools that He has given us and the work of the Holy Spirit. And we should do this to glorify God.

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of The Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen