



Part Three – As A Family (Matthew 12:46-50, Philippians 2:1-11)

Community Group Study Guide for the week of Feb. 7, 2021

Read Matthew 12:46-50

1. What is your fondest family memory?
2. What is ideal Christian fellowship or community to you?
3. Who came to find Jesus? Why? ([12:46](#))
4. What two rhetorical questions did Jesus pose when He heard about His family's arrival? ([12:48](#))
5. Who can become a member of Jesus' family? ([12:50](#))
6. What circumstances led you to want to become a member of God's family?
7. What special bonds does the family of God have that earthly families do not?
8. What could you do today to strengthen the bonds you have with another Christian brother or sister?

Read Philippians 2:1-11

9. How much of a peacemaker are you?
10. What four qualities mark unity with Christ? ([2:1](#))
11. What did Paul say about self-centeredness? ([2:3-4](#))
12. How is Christ the best example of humility and unselfishness for us? ([2:6-8](#))
13. How can Christ help you keep peace with others?
14. How does Christ's example of humility challenge our natural self-centeredness?
15. What practical steps can you take this week to demonstrate humility in your relationships? At home? At work? At church?

Discuss and Apply:

1. How do I view the church community?
2. What keeps me from deeper engagement?
3. How can experiencing the encouragement and belonging Jesus offers in the gospel free me to offer encouragement and belonging to others?
4. What is one step the Lord is calling me to take toward the family at Community of Hope?

Life Application Bible Notes - Matt 12:46-50

[12:46-50](#) Jesus was not denying his responsibility to his earthly family. On the contrary, he criticized the religious leaders for not following the Old Testament command to honor their parents ([15:1-9](#)). He provided for his mother's security as he hung on the cross ([John 19:25-27](#)). His mother and brothers were present in the upper room at Pentecost ([Acts 1:14](#)). Instead, Jesus was pointing out that spiritual relationships are as binding as physical ones, and he was paving the way for a new community of believers (the universal church), our spiritual family.

Life Application Bible Notes - Phil 2:1-11

[2:1-5](#) Many people—even Christians—live only to make a good impression on others or to please themselves. But selfishness brings discord. Paul therefore stressed spiritual unity, asking the Philippians to love one another and to be one in spirit and purpose. When we work together, caring for the problems of others as if they were our problems, we demonstrate Christ's example of putting others first, and we experience unity. Don't be so concerned about making a good impression or meeting your own needs that you strain relationships in God's family.

[2:3](#) Selfishness can ruin a church, but genuine humility can build it. Being humble involves having a true perspective about ourselves (see [Romans 12:3](#)). It does not mean that we should put ourselves down. Before God, we are sinners, saved only by God's grace, but we *are* saved and therefore have great worth in God's Kingdom. We are to lay aside selfishness and treat others with respect and common courtesy. Considering others' interests as more important than our own links us with Christ, who was a true example of humility.

[2:4](#) Philippi was a cosmopolitan city. The composition of the church reflected great diversity, with people from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life. [Acts 16](#) gives us some indication of the diverse makeup of this church. The church included Lydia, a Jewish convert from Asia and a wealthy businesswoman ([Acts 16:14](#)); the slave girl ([Acts 16:16, 17](#)), probably a native Greek; and the jailer serving this colony of the empire, probably a Roman ([Acts 16:25-36](#)). With so many different backgrounds among the members, unity must have been difficult to maintain. Although there is no evidence of division in the church, its unity had to be safeguarded ([3:2](#); [4:2](#)). Paul encourages us to guard against any selfishness, prejudice, or jealousy that might lead to dissension. Showing genuine interest in others is a positive step forward in maintaining unity among believers.

[2:5](#) Jesus Christ was humble, willing to give up his rights in order to obey God and serve people. Like Christ, we should have a servant's attitude, serving out of love for God and for others, not out of guilt or fear. Remember, you can choose your attitude. You can approach life expecting to be served, or you can look for opportunities to serve others. See [Mark 10:45](#) for more on Christ's attitude of servanthood.

2:5-7 The Incarnation was the act of the preexistent Son of God voluntarily assuming a human body and human nature. Without ceasing to be God, he became a human being, the man called Jesus. He did not give up his deity to become human, but he set aside the right to his glory and power. In submission to the Father's will, Christ limited his power and knowledge. Jesus of Nazareth was subject to place, time, and many other human limitations. What made his humanity unique was his freedom from sin. In his full humanity, Jesus showed us everything about God's character that can be conveyed in human terms. The Incarnation is explained further in these passages: [John 1:1-14](#); [Romans 1:2-5](#); [2 Corinthians 8:9](#); [1 Timothy 3:16](#); [Hebrews 2:14](#); and [1 John 1:1-3](#).

2:5-11 These verses are probably from a hymn sung by the early Christian church. The passage holds many parallels to the prophecy of the suffering servant in [Isaiah 53](#). As a hymn, it was not meant to be a complete statement about the nature and work of Christ. Several key characteristics of Jesus Christ, however, are praised in this passage: (1) Christ has always existed with God; (2) Christ is equal to God because he *is* God ([John 1:1ff](#); [Colossians 1:15-19](#)); (3) though Christ is God, he became a man in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation for all people; (4) Christ did not just have the appearance of being a man—he actually became human to identify with our sins; (5) Christ voluntarily laid aside his divine rights and privileges out of love for his Father; (6) Christ died on the cross for our sins so we wouldn't have to face eternal death; (7) God glorified Christ because of his obedience; (8) God raised Christ to his original position at the Father's right hand, where he will reign forever as our Lord and Judge. How can we do anything less than praise Christ as our Lord and dedicate ourselves to his service!

2:5-11 Often people excuse selfishness, pride, or evil by claiming their rights. They think, "I can cheat on this test; after all, I deserve to pass this class," or "I can spend all this money on myself—I worked hard for it," or "I can get an abortion; I have a right to control my own body." But as believers, we should have a different attitude, one that enables us to lay aside our rights in order to serve others. If we say we follow Christ, we must also say we want to live as he lived. We should develop his attitude of humility as we serve, even when we are not likely to get recognition for our efforts. Are you selfishly clinging to your rights, or are you willing to serve?

2:8 Death on a cross (crucifixion) was the form of capital punishment that Romans used for notorious criminals. It was excruciatingly painful and humiliating. Prisoners were nailed or tied to a cross and left to die. Death might not come for several days, and it usually came by suffocation when the weight of the weakened body made breathing more and more difficult. Jesus died as one who was cursed ([Galatians 3:13](#)). How amazing that the perfect man should die this most shameful death so that we would not have to face eternal punishment!

2:9-11 At the Last Judgment, even those who are condemned will recognize Jesus' authority and right to rule. People can choose now to commit their lives to Jesus as Lord or be forced to acknowledge him as Lord when he returns. Christ may return at any moment. Are you prepared to meet him?