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GOD'S FAMILY

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." ¹⁵ Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. ¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock **I will build my church**, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. **Matthew 16:13-18 NLT**

Peter's declaration marked the foundation of the church, built not on physical stones, but on faith in Jesus and truth.

The church is a place of belonging, a family of believers and God wants to use the church to help deliver us from our loneliness.

WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT...

- The church is not a building.
- The church is not a denomination or a specific tradition.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵ "If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth"... **John 14:15-17a NLT**

¹⁶ Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? **1 Corinthians 3:16 NLT**

WHAT THE CHURCH IS...

- The church is the collective body of believers united by faith in Jesus Christ.
- The church is a family.

- We are members of God's family.

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ...

¹⁷ He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. ¹⁸ Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. ¹⁹ So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. **You are members of God's family.** ²⁰ **Together, we are his house**, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. ²¹ We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

²² Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit. **Ephesians 2:4-5, 17-22 NLT**

- The church is the Body of Christ.

¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. ³ Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. ⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and **we all belong to each other.** **Romans 12:1-5 NLT**

BARRIERS TO GETTING CONNECTED...

- Insecurity issues, selfish, judgmental
- We keep everyone at arm's length, unapproachable, guarded, afraid.
- Past wounds

God's presence in our lives, the Holy Spirit and the community of the church offer hope, belonging, and a fresh start.

Jesus experienced true isolation on the cross so that we never have to.