

## What we're learning in Holy Homes

*Holy Homes is a group of believers who meet on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month at 6:30 pm to sharpen one another by discussing topics relevant to having a holy home. These notes are a summary of what the Holy Homes group discussed in the last meeting. If you're interested in joining this group call Josh Norris at 884-4762.*

**Fellowship of the saints** - The greek word for 'fellowship' is most commonly described as 'participation'. This means participating in life with the saints. But there is much involved in that participation; much more than just "hanging out with other believers" or "eating together". Let's see what true fellowship involves.

**1) Hundreds of New Testament verses refer to saints as "brothers and sisters". Why is this so?** It is often said that you cannot choose your family. This is also true of the family of God. John 1:12 says "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name". We can't choose our Christian family. Even if we choose to leave Nampa Bible Church and go elsewhere, that doesn't "un-family" us. We need to learn to deal with the brothers and sisters God has given us and not run to *other* brothers and sisters. This familial love can be a source of great hope for those who have no biological family to turn to.

**2) Since we are brothers and sisters, how should we treat one another?** The many "one anothers" listed in the bible are a great insight to how we should be dealing with our spiritual siblings. However, commands to regard one another as more important than yourselves, serve one another, and comfort one another are done effectively only in the context of a relationship. It's vital that we get beyond the basics of "small talk" and sharpen one another by talking about deeper things. Talking about what we're learning and how we're really doing will encourage others and keep our relationships deep and meaningful.

**3) As brothers and sisters, how involved should we be in one anothers everyday lives?** In order to encourage and love one another we need to meet together constantly. The easiest way for this to happen is for each family to get deeply connected to several other families. If each family got to know several different families on a deep and meaningful level, we'd eventually have an interwoven spiderweb of relationships. This would prevent people from "falling thru the cracks" and would allow an effective chain of "one anothering" to occur. The telephone, email and cards are all excellent resources for keeping up with one another and encouraging one another. If we notice someone missing from Sunday service, we should call them and make sure everything is okay. These are also good resources for thanking and encouraging those we see serving. It's also important to sacrifice our time and resources for the sake of others. This kind of sacrifice is a testimony to our children, those we are serving, as well as outsiders who see this genuine love in action.

**4) Why is it so difficult to behave like biological brothers and sisters? Why don't most Christians allow others to be deeply involved in their lives?** The one thing many biological brothers and sisters have is a deep relationship. A relationship where they can tell one another things without fear of judgment or abandonment. Christians often experience pride, independence, selfishness, fear of judgment and general sin as big obstacles to deep and meaningful relationships. We manage to clutter our lives with time commitments to trivial and eternally insignificant hobbies while we falter in our personal relationships. We must make a focused effort to put people and relationships as a priority in our lives. Relationships are of eternal importance; television, soccer, movies, cars, houses, work and skiing are not.

**5) What made the early church in Acts 2:42-47 & 4:32-37 different from the church as we know it?** The early church, seen after Pentecost in Acts 2, was a church of new believers. They were fired up about their Savior and, with the Holy Spirit's help, they were living as Christians ought. Whenever a need arose, they would sacrifice. They would sell land and possessions in order to help those in need. They did not consider their possessions theirs, but instead saw them as God's entrusted gifts. They met as often as possible and did everything they could together. They worshiped together, learned together, prayed together and ate together. Basically, they were being brothers and sisters.

**6) What can we do to help Nampa Bible Church be more like the early church?** The biggest step to becoming more like the church after Pentecost is to focus on relationships. We need to put forth effort to get to know other families in the church and to apply the "one anothers" to them. These relationships are required for us to know when there are needs to be met. Once we have these bonds, then we can focus on loving, accepting, serving, caring, tolerating, comforting, and encouraging one another. If we are willing to share the things God has blessed us with, then we will truly be more like the early church.

Practically speaking this means inviting others over for dinner, games, babysitting or conversation. It means asking the deep questions like "How is your walk?" and "What did you think of the sermon?". It means regarding others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). It means sharing our burdens and needs without fear that we might be "inconveniencing others". (in reality you're blessing them by allowing them to serve!) And it means giving to those whom we see in need, even if it means sacrificing our own time, money or resources to help them grow in Christ.