

situation or condition, sharing the same experiences. Fellowship is a nautical word. "Fellows in the same ship." The idea being that of people having the same things in common and sharing them together with each other. That's the way it is in the family of God. We share with God and with one another. In real fellowship people experience mutuality - the art of giving and receiving.

You Were Formed For God's Family

As members of His eternal family God wants you to belong to His local church family. *"You are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country and you belong in God's household with every other Christian"* Ephesians 2:19 (LB).

It is a place where you can experience:

1. Love for God and others
2. Warm friendly fellowship
3. Secure experience of belonging
4. Accountable Christian community
5. Helpful caring and sharing
6. Spiritual growth and understanding

God says in Philippians 2: 1-2; *"If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favour: Agree with each other, love each other, be deeply committed to each other"* (The Message).

Perhaps you are thinking, *"I don't feel a part of the church"*. Or *"The Church is not for me"*. May I encourage you to accept the fact that the local church is not perfect, while here on earth. Why not let go of your thoughts about the church and focus on being in tune with God. Then you will discover the relevancy of the local church and how it can benefit you.

Jesus said, *"I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* Matthew 16:18 (KJV). So the church is as real as the historical Jesus. He is the head of his church and all genuine Christians are members. He is the only one who can make you a member of his eternal family. Here's what you do!

Ask Jesus Christ to come into your life and be your Saviour and Lord. He will give you eternal life, forgiveness and peace. Then attend a good Bible teaching church for spiritual growth and fellowship.

PMA PO Box 2300, Port Orchard, WA
98366

www.prisonmission.org

"PMA provides Bible Correspondence courses in English and Spanish at no cost to inmates"

PRISON MISSION
So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- John 8:36 ASSOCIATION

*Formed
For
Fellowship*

*"So we, being many,
are one body in Christ,
and every one members
one of another"*
Romans 12:5 (KJV).

Bible
CORRESPONDENCE
FELLOWSHIP

PMA PO Box 2300, Port Orchard, WA 98366
www.prisonmission.org

"PMA provides Bible Correspondence courses in English and Spanish at no cost to inmates"

YOU WERE FORMED FOR GOD'S FAMILY

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another"
Romans 12:5 (KJV).

Many Christians have received a great blessing from Rick Warren's book, *"The Purpose Driven Life"*. In it, Pastor Rick covers the topic *"You Were Formed For God's Family"*. He says, *"The idea here is that of Fellowship with God which is based on inheritance and identification."*

1. INHERITANCE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

When we accept Christ as our Saviour and Lord, we enter into a new relationship with God. We become members of his eternal family. *"Give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves"* Colossians 1:12-13 (NIV).

It is then that we understand God's original purpose; that we would be formed into the family of God. He planned for all those who receive Christ, to become his sons and daughters and live with him forever. As Ephesians 1:5 reminds us, *"His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure"* (NLT). The Bible says,

"God has reserved a priceless inheritance for his children. It is kept safe in heaven for you, pure, undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay" 1Peter 1:4 (NLT).

What exactly does that Inheritance Include?

1. We get to live with God forever - (John 14:1-7; Colossians 1:5).
2. We will be changed to be like Christ - (Romans 8:25, 1John 3:2, Philippians 3:20-21).
3. We will one day be free from all pain suffering and death - (Romans 8:18-25; Revelation 21:2-4).
4. We will be rewarded with positions of service in the ages to come - (Revelation 7:15; 22:1-5; 1Corinthians 6:3).
5. We will get to share in Christ's eternal riches in Heaven - (Philippians 1:23; Romans 8:8-9; 8:17; Colossians 3:1-4).

This means that your eternal inheritance is Priceless.... Pure Permanent and Protected. No one can take it from you; it cannot be destroyed by war, a poor economy, or a natural disaster.

2. IDENTIFICATION WITH THE FAMILY OF GOD

Rick Warren speaks about the importance of

identifying with God's family on earth. There are many substantial ways to identify with fellow members of the family of God.

We must show continuing evidences that indicate our salvation and membership in God's family. Let me suggest a few:

1. A desire to publicly testify or speak about Christ
2. A willingness to regularly attend a local Church
3. A genuine interest in Bible Study for spiritual growth
4. A participation in acts of fellowship (Communion, Offerings, Social acts)
5. A practice of prevailing Prayer
6. A use of talents for God and for the blessing of others
7. A readiness to take on active Church or Christian leadership roles

Rick Warren says that *'Being formed for God's Family'*, is all about genuine FELLOWSHIP.

So let's think about Fellowship and its benefits. In Acts 2:42, we see examples of the early Christian church enjoying 'fellowship'.

The early church *"devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer"* (Acts 2:42).

The basic meaning of 'Fellowship' comes from the idea of people being in the same