



OPENING PRAYER

Dear God, we thank you for this gathering of our small group and the ways in which you are working through us. As we settle into our time together this week, we ask you to guide our conversations, our thoughts, and relationships. We offer up to you everything that feels weighty or distracting. We ask that you pour out on us your deep peace, which you offer freely. Multiply our time together and help us to pursue you daily. Amen.

COMMUNITY

Time to build relationships: mix + mingle!

- + Did something specific resonate with you from the sermon or worship service?

- + If you couldn't attend, ask others in your group what stood out to them.
(Note: Links to both video and audio versions of previous sermons can be found at www.standrewmethodist.org/podcasts.)

- + Where did you see God's presence in your past weekend?

WATCH THE VIDEO | Who is your family?

We encourage you to take notes

SCRIPTURE

A great starting place is always God's word.

Matthew 12:46-50

⁴⁶While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Ephesians 2:17-22

¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually[b] into a dwelling-place for God.

SITUATION

Family is a unique experience for every person. When Jesus preaches throughout his ministry, he includes many familial references, metaphors, parables, and teachings. However, as in most of Jesus' teachings, he flips the worldly definition and perception of recognizable terms on their head. Jesus preaches a new understanding of what it means to be family as the element that binds members together, in God's realm, it is not merely blood lineage, but rather faith. From Jesus, we learn that our faith or relationship with God is what has the power to transform us, and our identity... including our role as "family". Sprinkled throughout the gospels, are moments when the crowds or disciples pester Jesus in the middle of his teachings about his nearby relatives. Using that moment as a timely example of reorienting what it truly means to be "relatives" he preaches the importance of being focused on God and God's will, stepping out in faith, which is what binds us together in this new "family". As Christians, our faith forms a new bond between us. What once seemed to be limited to direct lineage or blood relative status, is now overcome by the powerful reality of pursuing God together in faith as brothers and sisters in Christ.

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

- + How does the relationship between "family" turn on its head with Jesus' preaching in Matthew 12?

- + What are we told about our identity in the Ephesians 2 scripture?

- + Why was "lineage" or "genealogy" documented all throughout in the Bible?

- + One of Jesus patterns in preaching is to highlight teachings from the Old Testament. What Old Testament stories of "family" come to mind?

- + When Jesus says, "whoever does the will of my Father", he is describing the moral will of God. The things that God desires, calls, and commands from us. How can we practice asking for clarity of God's will?

PRACTICAL LIFE QUESTIONS

- + What are key qualities of the “family” of God?
- + Who are the people in your life that feel like family? What bonds you to them?
- + Where are places in which you feel most at home? What qualities of those places makes you feel comfortable?
- + Jesus gives a broad-stroke declaration that his disciples, his followers, and anyone who does the will of God is his ‘brother and sister and mother’ (v.50). Pretend you were with Jesus in person when he said this in real time: what would it feel like to comprehend what he is saying?
- + Who at church, or what about Church, creates that feeling of “family” or “home”?

GROWTH

Journal Prompt

Jesus, I want to bear fruit this week so that your light within me can be evident in a world that so desperately needs your Spirit. Help me to be aware of the fruitfulness of this next week. You are the True Vine and I commit to remaining rooted in you, Jesus.

Calling Prompt

God is inviting you to participate in his ministry by answering the unique call on your life. How can you actively respond to scripture and God’s presence this week?

Closing Prayer

Let’s prepare for the week ahead, shaped by our time together today.

Gracious God, we trust that you go with us in the week ahead. We are changed each time we gather to learn more about you and your Word. Please give us boldness to proclaim your good news in the coming week and bring us back safely together again in this community. Amen.