

# Relationships in the Church

## I. “Brethren”—The Church is a family of brothers and sisters, a family of adopted children whose Father is God.

*Ephesians 1:1-5*

*“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,*

*To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:*

*<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will . . .”*

- *<sup>1:2</sup> God our Father . . .*
- *In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption . . .*
- *<sup>2:19</sup> members of God’s household . . .*
- *<sup>6:21</sup> the dear brother*
- *<sup>6:24</sup> peace to the brothers*

Because God, the Father, so loves us, he gave his one and only Son (John 3:16). We have been forgiven by Christ’s death on the cross so that we could enter a relationship with God as his children. As a result we have “eternal life” which is to “know him the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent” (John 17:3).

When I would attend church as a child, the members of the church would call my dad, “Brother Bob” and my mother, “Sister Norma.” We don’t use these greetings as frequently in our circles today, but as I have visited churches in different cultures, this is still a common occurrence. A metaphor for the church is a family, a fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ.

### a. The motive for adoption

i. In love, *agape* love, unconditional, sacrificial love we have been adopted into his family.

1. Our heavenly Father marked out ahead of time, predestined, decided beforehand.

2. When a family decides to adopt, it is a long planned out process.
3. They pray together as a couple, consider the challenges, count the cost, gather the resources, consult an agency, prepare the home and then, they adopt.
4. Illustration of “in love, he predestined . . .”

Loraine Boettner (March 7, 1901 – January 3, 1990) was an American theologian, teacher, and author in the Reformed tradition. He is best known for his works on predestination, Roman Catholicism, and Postmillennial eschatology. Although I don't embrace his systematic theology completely, I appreciated an illustration on predestination and I have adapted it.

My grandfather dearly loved his five grandsons. He taught us how ski, took us to the Worlds Fair, spoiled us. invited me to build homes with him. When I was old enough to help him as he built homes, I would come to work for him. At eleven, I was sweeping saw dust off the floor and picking pebbles out of the soil being prepared for becoming a home builder.

Each day I would eagerly get up to go to work building homes for my grandfather.

Did I do so under compulsion or was it of my own free will?

My grandfather was the architect, designing the blue prints for the house. He was the master builder who instructed and supervised my construction. He was my employer who paid me generously including a Swedish smorgasbord made by my grandmother for lunch.

Did I come to work by my own free will or was I compelled by love? In love, he predestined me.

#### **b. The meaning of adoption**

- i. Under Roman Law, adoption was a very serious matter as the father had absolute power over his children as long as he and the child lived.

- ii. The biological father would symbolically sell his child (three times) and not buy him back.
- iii. The adopting father had to go to the Roman magistrate and plead his case for adoption.
- iv. When the adoption process was completed, the child had all the rights of a biological child in the new family. The child had the full privileges and responsibilities. The break with the old family was so complete that even all the debts and obligations connected with the previous family were canceled out and abolished as if they never existed.

### c. The marvel of adoption

- i. Before we came to faith in Christ, we belonged to the family of Adam. We had his sin nature and were under his powers. We even reflected the character of our father in his pride and rebellion against God.
- ii. But, by God's grace through faith in Christ, we were adopted into God's family. Our past debt of sin was canceled and we are now under the authority of a new father, receiving a new inheritance, and acquiring new brothers and sisters.
- iii. Now we have the relationship of a child with our Father and should reflect His character.
- iv. If we are disobedient, we are disciplined, which is a proof of sonship (Heb. 12:6-8). Discipline is an expression of our Father's love for us.
- v. Alexander the Great took a cowardice soldier by the neck who also had the name, Alexander. He said, "Either change your character or change your name!"
- vi. We can only marvel at God's grace that he has brought us into his family.

### *Application*

One of my children, as a teen, was struggling with the rules of home and the “oppression” of parental authority. She was serving as a counselor at Lakeside Christian Camp after her high school graduation and heading to college in the fall. I received a surprise evening call. She said, “Dad, I was talking with a camper in my cabin tonight. She was crying as she shared with me how difficult her family life has been. Her dad was mean to her mom and left home. She is really struggling and hurting. Well, it is now snack shop time, but I just had to call you. I haven’t always appreciated the rules at home but I want you to know how thankful I am for you.

Just as little Hebrew children raise their hands upward to their father saying, “Abba! Abba!”, so we can lift our hands to our Heavenly Father. The apostle Paul reminds us that “we have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” We can have the closeness, care and security of a child to their dad.

The greatest apologetic for the Gospel is this: “*By this will all men know you are my disciples if you have love for one another*” (John 13:35-36). Loving relationships with other “children of God” is so important to our walk with Christ. Through those relationships we fulfill the “one another” commands of Scripture and grow in our relationship with God.

**PRINCIPLE:** A healthy church is a family, brothers and sisters, where loving relationships are experienced and God is worshipped as a loving heavenly Father.

## II. “Building”—The Church is a building—the temple of the indwelling Spirit of Christ Jesus who is the cornerstone.

*“<sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (Eph 2:19-22).*

I am the grandson of a Swedish carpenter. I learned how to build homes as Grandpa Pearson’s apprentice. At 10 years old, I was sweeping sawdust off the floor of a house under construction and picking up stones before seeding the lawn.

When I was a high school student Grandpa handed me the paint and paintbrush and said, “Paint the sash of the window.”

I asked, “Where’s the masking tape?”

Grandpa said, “Real painters don’t use masking tape.” Then he walked away. Those were the days before spray painting and vinyl windows!

Grandpa trusted me and encouraged me to develop skills for building homes. Soon my brothers and I were framing, roofing and siding homes in his absence.

Not only was carpentry Grandpa’s job, it was his calling. His passion to provide “starter” homes for young families inspired me. He equipped me with building skills that helped me work my way through school. I still enjoy working around the house with Grandpa’s tools. His example and lessons often come to mind.

A building such as a home is an “edifice”. To “edify” is “to build up.” As part of the church, we are to “build up” and “edify” one another building up the church.

*<sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God . . .*

“So then . . .” The Apostle Paul is summing up this section of his letter speaking about Gentiles new position in Christ using the metaphor of a building, a house or home. Gentiles are now integrated into the new dwelling place of God, the Church. They are no longer excluded but are fellow members of the family, the household of God.

The Gentiles were formerly *xenoi* or *paroikoi* . *Xenoi* means “foreigners’ from which we get xenophobia and *paroikoi* refers to “immigrants” who are foreigners who are living in a country without the rights of citizenship. They were strangers to the covenant of promise given to Abraham.

But, these Gentiles are in the new position as “*sumpolitai ton hagion*,” that is, “*fellow citizens with the saints*.” From the position of “alienation” (v. 12) they are now fellow-citizens with the people of Israel. The “saints” who were set apart by God, as the Church of Christians (as in Eph 1:1). Jews and Gentiles are part of this new entity, the Church.

*<sup>20</sup> . . . built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone . . .*

Paul moves from the picture of being members of the house to be the house itself. God is the builder. The Church is “*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone*.” The apostles and prophets are two groups of people who make one foundation for the Church (Matt 16:18 and Rev 21:14). These apostles are referred to in Eph 4:11 and may refer only to the twelve or all the apostles who were witnesses of the resurrection. The prophets could be in reference to the Old Testament prophets as in Romans 1:1-3. However, since they are listed after the apostles they may be New Testament prophets as in Eph 3:5 and 4:11. These are those who reveal God’s Word.

The new dwelling place is now under construction. In Christ the dwelling place is being fitted together as a holy temple.

The same word for *“being joined or fitted together”* is used in other Greek literature of being “associated” with one another. Every part or piece of the building is being fitted together. Paul has unity in mind.

My dad’s dad was a tenant farmer in Rhode Island for some families from Boston. Each summer in my elementary years included working on this old New England farm. One summer my dad and I rebuilt stone walls that had broken down. Slaves had built these walls in the 1700’s. They were constructed so well that they had withstood wind and weathering, gravitational pull and erosion, for over 250 years. So when Dad, who paid me 50 cents an hour, rebuilt the walls we looked to reconstruct the walls placing the stones back into their original positions.

The Church is composed of parts that are fit together to form a unity.

The whole building or structure *“being joined together”* is an expression used by stone masons to describe the elaborate process by which stones were fitted together. The focus is on the interrelatedness of the parts, the compact connection of one part with another. Now the Gentiles have been included in the inner mortar and stone of the new building structure. The present tense indicates that this is a building process that hasn’t been finished. It is an ongoing process that is increasing. It increases of every kind.

*“In the Lord . . .”* is the sphere in which the whole process is taking place and being accomplished, the whole building is growing into a holy temple. It is in Christ, not human strength, that this new structure is being built.

*<sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit”*

*“In him”* parallels verse 21 and thus points to Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is central. He is the cornerstone which connected and concentrated upon itself the weight of the building (Abbott, pp. 70-78).

*“You”* indicates that the building is composed of people, Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ. The apostles and prophets are the foundation, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, and the building itself is a new spiritual entity, the Church, composed of all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

*“By the Spirit”* the dwelling place is being built together into a house of God. It is by the believer being indwelt, sealed, led, taught and empowered by the Holy Spirit that the Church is being built up, strengthened, preserved, prepared for our eternal home.

*Eph 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

**Principle:** God has intended that the people of God, His Church, dwell together in unity. This unity is not found in our similarity to one another but to our shared access to God through Christ and our shared participation in the Holy Spirit who indwells us. Our unity is found in our shared foundation built on the Word of God.

**Application:** To strengthen that unity, we need to gather together to encourage one another. A quality of healthy churches is believers gathering together in large and small groups ministry.

In smaller gatherings, you can get to know your fellow believers Christians in a deeper way, to pray for one another, to study God's Word and to serve others. In this context we can experience accountable community. This small group can be a home fellowship, or a ministry group like a food pantry team, a worship team or a peer fellowship like youth group, Faithmoms, or a Sunday School class.

### III. "Body"—The Church is the body of Christ.

#### 1 Corinthians 11 (ESV)

*<sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the **body** eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

What does it mean to "discern the body"? The word "body" is used in two ways in this context and passage.

#### 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

*<sup>16</sup> The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup> Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*

First, we think of Jesus' physical body that was whipped and pierced and crushed and torn. To discern the "body" is to recognize that the body of Jesus was wounded for us? His blood was shed for our sins? His body took our place so that our sins could be forgiven.

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “*This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*” <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Second, his body is spiritual and that is his Church. The emphasis in these chapters is on the Church, the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

<sup>12</sup> For just as *the body* is one and has many members, and all the members of *the body*, though many, are *one body*, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into *one body*—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Recognizing his body leads to reconciliation with God. Repent of your sin and trust Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. We need to take sin seriously. He died to pay the penalty for sin and to give us power over sin.

To persist in sin is to fail to recognize the significance of Christ's sacrificial death.

Recognizing his spiritual body leads to reconciliation with people.

Ephesians 4 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is *one body* and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift . . .

... <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up *the body* of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom *the whole body*, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes *the body* grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Christ has provided gifted people to “equip” or “prepare” his Church. The verb translated “equip” literally means to:

- Mend and heal broken bones
- Repair and clean torn fishing nets restoring them to catch fish
- Rebuild fallen walls by placing stones back in position

Joined and held together (v. 16) repeats the same words found in 2:19 and emphasizes “association” with one another. It means the interrelatedness of the parts, the compact connection of one part with another.

Each member of the body is equipped with spiritual gifts to serve.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;<sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;<sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.<sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

### **Application**

What is your spiritual gift(s)? Are you using your spiritual gifts(s) to strengthen the body of Christ? How do you identify your gift(s)?

- Ask the Lord to identify and sensitize you to needs around you.
- Pray about those needs.
- Look for ways to serve by ministering to those needs.
- Evaluate your effectiveness.
- Seek the counsel of others who can observe your fruitfulness in ministry.

### **Principle:**

A healthy church involves pastors and leaders equipping, empowering and releasing God’s people in ministry. God’s people use their gifts to build up other believers.

## **IV. “Bride” —The Church is the bride of Christ dearly loved by him.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is likened to the husband and the Church is likened to his bride. A husband’s love for his wife should demonstrate Christ’s love for the Church. Marriages are a visual aid to help people understand the Gospel. As a husband gives his time and strength to love, serve, protect and encourage his wife, he is showing Christ’s sacrificial love.

A husband must show Christ’s *agape* love. *Agape* love reflects the love of God. It is not *eros*, sexual passion, or *philia*, family love, but *agape* love. It is selfless. It is not, “If you love me, I will love you.” It does not seek its own satisfaction. It strives for the highest good of the loved one.

Christ laid down his life for us. That is, He died “in our place.” Sacrifice means dying to our own needs and preferences and placing her needs first. This means dying to self. Christ did not die for his own sins, he had none. He died for sinners.

“That he might sanctify her . . .” That is, “to make her holy, set apart from sin to serve in love.” Love transforms. Sacrificial, unconditional love provides security and receptivity to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Words are powerful. “Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them” (Col 3:19). Speak words of encouragement, endearment, compliments. Notice the little things she does and express genuine appreciation.

Let your words be characterized by “AAA” that is, apology, affection and action.

- Give a specific apology,
- show affection with a hug and
- change the offensive behavior to encouraging action.

Is your wife blossoming like a Spring daffodil or tulip? Nourish, feed, and cherish, keep it warm. A flower blossoms when the soil is fertilized and the plant is watered, and you provide a lot of sunshine Add some Miracle Grow with languages of love like time together, acts of service, gift giving, physical touch and words of affirmation.

Washing with the Word. When you wash it is with the Word of God.

*“ . . . so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isa 55:11).*

*“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword,  
piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow,  
and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12).*

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,  
for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,  
<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17).*

## **Ephesians 5:25-27 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that

*he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

Ephesians 2:10     *“We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”*

Hebrews 10:24     *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”*

**Application:** Are you responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, confessing your sin, yielding yourself to the Spirit’s control, turning from sin and walking in obedience to God.

*Ephesians 5:15* Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**Principle:** A healthy church is composed of believers who are walking in obedience to Christ. They are passionate about the Lord and their walk with him.

## V.     **“Battalion”—The Church is in Spiritual Warfare as God’s Army.**

In his *Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis wrote: “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about [the devil and demons]. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel and excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased with both errors.”

Some discard the concept of a personal devil as the ridiculous “red devil with horns and pitchfork” in marketing pictures. Others empower the concept seeing a demon in every ailment and emotional disturbance. Jedi Yoda in Star Wars Episode III, *Revenger of the Sith*, describes evil as “the dark side of the force” embodied in Chancellor Palpatine, the Sith Lord, who desires to rule the Galaxy.

In reality, the Church is engaged in spiritual warfare. Christ is the Captain of the army. Jesus promised, “I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matt 16:18). This is an encouraging promise yet it is also a warning. The gates of Hades are seeking to prevail against the Church to overcome the Church!

The Christian walk is a supernatural life which needs supernatural power in facing a supernatural opponent.

## Ephesians 6:10-20 (ESV)

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.*

***“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers”***

### A. The believer’s **strength** for spiritual warfare

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

The Apostle Paul instructs us to “be strong” which is best translated “be made strong.” We do not have the strength in ourselves but rather must be empowered from above. The Greek verb is in the present tense meaning this is not a once for all experience but a constant, moment by moment yielding to the Spirit’s control (Eph 5:18). This is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (Eph 1:19-20).

There is only one power to overcome the challenges of life and that can conquer the forces of evil. That source is the risen Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us His Spirit to indwell us. Jesus promised, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b).

### B. The believer’s **equipment** for spiritual warfare

*<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

“Put on” is an active verb. It involves our participation. Literally, put on the *panoplia* of God. The *hoplia* are the pieces of armor. Pan means “all.” Together, the word means completeness, not neglecting any piece of equipment. It is the full armor. To have victory in the Christian life, we need to be prepared for the battle.

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Ephesus as a prisoner in Rome. It is probable that as he wrote, he was chained to a Roman soldier. Although his body was chained, his spirit was alive. His mind was contemplating an analogy of the soldier of Rome to the soldier of Christ. The full armor included

The offensive weapons were prayer and the Word of God. Paul asks the believers in Ephesus to pray for him that he would preach the Gospel boldly.

1. The metaphor of a belt is so often used in the Bible because the belt is needed to gather garments before beginning work, running a race, or entering a battle. The belt symbolizes

C. The believer’s **opponent** for spiritual warfare

*<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

“*We do not wrestle against . . .*” This is a spiritual wrestling match. It is hand to hand combat.

*“Against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

The word “against” occurs six times in verses 11-12. The opponent is described as well-organized and numerous. Evil is not an impersonal force, but an organized army under the direction of the Prince of this world.

Remember, we do not fight in our own strength. We depend on God’s power and put on His armor for battle.

<i>The Devil’s Strategy</i>	<i>The Armor to Resist</i>
Deception	Belt of truth

He is the “Father of lies” (John 8:44). He is called “diabolos” which means “to deceive.”	
	Breastplate of righteousness

***Application***

Are you praying for your fellow warriors in battle? Are you engaged in the battle by declaring “boldly” and “fearlessly” the Gospel?

***Principle***

A healthy church is composed of those who are living the Gospel and sharing the Gospel with others. In a healthy church we are praying for one another as we advance into spiritual warfare wearing the full armor of God.

## Church in a Covid-19 World

1. Present the hope of the Gospel both locally and globally.
2. Prayerfully walk with our Heavenly Father in His strength through the trials.
3. Strengthen connections between believers to bear one another’s burdens.
  4. Leaders guide, equip and multiply ministry.
  5. Encourage and equip parents to disciple their children.
6. Show gifts of compassion to the hungry, the hurting, and the hopeless.