

Family

By Matthew Day

When we joined the congregation in Borger, they welcomed us with hugs. They showed us around, explained how they do things. They welcomed us into their family. That is how I believe church should feel: like family.

When the Israelites put the Tabernacle, everyone played a part. They all worked together. This is how it works in a congregation. When someone in the congregation needs something done, everyone helps out. Working together brings everyone closer together. It makes the work more enjoyable. And it improves the speed and quality of the work. Paul says that we are all one body but different parts. It is only when those different parts come together that the LORD's work can be done. It is amazing to see everyone take time out of their lives to help someone in their congregation.

As a congregation we spend time playing together. On Sabbath, after services we will often talk and play games until the sunsets (or later). Occasionally we will go bowling together. And the kids are always asking to have a sleepover. Church shouldn't be just a place to study once a week. It should be a place to make friends and fellowship with other believers.

Our congregation studies together. Whenever one of us has a question we all get our Bibles out and start looking for the answer. Even during service, the teacher welcomes questions and comments. In an earlier issue I talked about Midrash. That is what we do, both in service and outside of services. Every congregation should have some amount of midrash. It can be done at any time. It is important to be able to discuss what you are studying with your congregation. You can learn a lot more that way.

(Isa 56:3) Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I *am* a dry tree.

As your congregation grows closer together it is important not to become cliquish. Welcome newcomers and show them around so that they are not lost. Explain things that your church does that they may not be familiar with. Our congregation does Hebrew prayers every Sabbath, so when new people come we try to explain how the prayers are laid out so that they can follow along. Make newcomers feel welcome in your family. Do not let them say "I have been separated from the LORD's people."

Making a congregation feel like family depends on every member of the congregation. Everyone must be willing to reach out to each other, make friends, and help each other out. But it has to start with one person reaching out to another and making him feel welcome.

I know I have been bragging about our congregation a lot. But it is the way they have made us feel like part of their family that inspired me to write this article. I hope that you are able to call your congregation family also.

Midrash Newsletter
August 2008