

10 Practical Steps in Following Jesus

Bob Gordon with David Fardouly



Step 6: Fellowship with Other Christians

Fatherhood and adoption

When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour we become part of God's family. God actually becomes a true Father to us and He adopts us as His sons (see Galatians 3:26,27; Galatians 4:6,7). We did not deserve this and we certainly were not naturally born to it. God did it only because of Jesus. It doesn't matter whether we are male or female, God still regards us now, in Christ, as His sons. We are very precious to Him and He loves us as a true Father should (see Romans 8:38,39). He guides us, provides for us, strengthens us and helps us to live in the best possible way for our long term good. He knows what we can cope with at any particular time and He knows when we need to be disciplined (see Hebrews 12:5-11). In fact, He only allows things to happen to us for our good, if we are walking in obedience to Him (Romans 8:28). He even wants us to come boldly into His presence and for us to have fellowship with Him (see Ephesians 3:12).

We need each other

As part of God's family, we cannot be Christians by ourselves. God has always called His people to live in a special relationship, both with Himself, and with each other. We should be like coals glowing in a fire. Together, we all give warmth and light to each other, as well as to others outside the fire. But if we do not get fellowship with other Christians we will begin to lose our fire – we will begin to go cold. We need to get in the fire together with other followers of Jesus. The best place to do this is in a church where Jesus Christ is preached as Saviour and Lord. Remember, the church is not the building but rather the community of people who follow Jesus. As a new Christian you need to be taught from God's Word and you need the encouragement

of other people who believe the same way as you do.

God knows you

God has not chosen you by chance. He knew you before you were born and He knows where you will be best able to serve Him and learn from Him.

*“For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.”
(Psalm 139:13-16)*

The church God places you in will need you as much as you need it. God has chosen you to do a specific work for Him. You are the best person for that job, so throw yourself into what you know God wants you to do. Be a worker in God's house, not a passenger. Do the little things that you see need to be done, if you have nothing else to do.

Serving the church is serving God. At the beginning of your Christian life, God will probably only ask you to do small simple things. As you prove faithful in these things, He will take you on to bigger and better things. He knows what you can handle.

We need the Church

The church of Jesus Christ is made up of every true Christian in the world. Obviously, all its members cannot meet at one time, so God has split up His worldwide church into local areas. These are the local churches which we, as part of the family of God, need to attend. God instituted these local churches to enable Christians to: –

- have fellowship with each other
- grow spiritually
- worship God
- serve God
- and reach out to the world with the message of God's salvation in Jesus

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

(Hebrews 10:25)

Part of a body

The church of Jesus Christ is described in the Bible as the body of Christ (see Ephesians 1:22,23). Just as a human body only functions as a whole – its members never do their own thing – so it should be with the church. The members of the church of Jesus Christ belong to one another (see Ephesians 4:25) and they are all important. In fact, every part needs to function (see Ephesians 4:16). It follows that we

as individuals need to be vitally involved in the body of Christ locally.

Worship in the church

When the church meets together, it is important to recognise that we should give time for worshipping God. We worship God not only for what He has done for us or through us, but for who He is. We are encouraged to join in this worship by contributing a hymn (or chorus), a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation, so that the church may be strengthened (see I Corinthians 14:26).

It's the people that count

When we as Christians meet together, the building isn't the important thing, it is the people that count.

Jesus said,

“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

(Matthew 18:20)

We are no longer aliens to God but rather we are members of God's household with Jesus at the centre of us all. In Jesus we are all joined and built together to become a place where God lives by His Spirit (see Ephesians 2:19-22). Share your faith with others in the body of Christ (the church) and let them share their faith with you.

Questions and Tips:

1. Read Hebrews 10:23-25 and answer the following questions:
 - a. Is God faithful? (verse 23)
 - b. Should we spur one another on and to what? (verse 24)
 - c. Is church attendance optional? (verse 25)
2. Have all Christians in the local church (or body of Christ) an important part to play in its life? (Romans 12:3-8)

3. How should the believer regard his fellow believers? (Philippians 2:3)
4. What was Paul's desire for the early churches? (I Corinthians 1:10)
5. Why is it necessary for believers to be united? (Romans 15:5,6; John 17:20-23)
6. How should we respond to leaders in the church? (Hebrews 13:7)
7. What can you do for God in your local church?
8. Read I Corinthians 12:12-27 and answer the following:
 - a. What is the church likened to in this passage?
 - b. What kinds of things are the individual Christians in the church likened to?
 - c. Are we all created to function the same way or differently?
 - d. Do we decide what part we should play in the church? If not, who does?
 - e. Would the church function as it should, if we did nothing or just what we wanted rather than follow God?
 - f. Are we equally important in the church whatever part we play?

Prayer

Almighty God, I thank you for placing me into your family. I ask you to show me clearly which local expression of your worldwide family you want me to join. I recognise the need I have to relate to my fellow believers. I also ask you to give me lasting friendships within the local church in which you place me. I am willing to serve that part of the body of Christ in any way that you ask of me because I know that as I serve the church, I serve you. I ask this in Jesus' precious name. Amen.