

Ephesians 6:21–24 | “We Are Family”
Preached on February 15, 2026 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 6, verses 21–24, as we are on the final passage in the book of Ephesians, and next week, we will begin Ecclesiastes. *[pause]*

But what a journey it has been through Ephesians—it gave us a mixture of deep theology with practical instruction. *[pause]*

While the truths found in Ephesians apply to us as individual Christians, throughout the book, the church as a whole was the focus.

And that’s what we will see this morning—we must never lose sight of the “community” aspect of our faith. *[pause]*

We are not just individuals meeting together, but we are a faith community, who are to have a certain closeness in our relationships, for we are family. *[pause]*

Let’s READ the passage. *[READ]*

There are certain well-known sayings when it comes to family. *[pause]*

We hear, “Family comes first,” or “Family is everything.” *[pause]*

If someone attacks your family member, you think, “No one messes with *my* family.”

And when you love each other, you may say, “That’s what family does,” or “We take care of our own.” *[pause]*

When *you* hear talk of ‘family,’ what comes to mind? *[pause]*

For some, your response is negative because you haven’t had good experiences in your family—there’s always some sort of conflict going on, and all you can think about is the *drama*.

But for others of you, when you think of family, a smile comes to your face. *[pause]*

You think of the closeness, the joy, the laughs, and the memories. *[pause]*

Well as Paul concludes his letter, we see a theme of ‘close family’ come out, and something that we see is that...

I. We are brothers and sisters in Christ!

Familial terms permeate the New Testament—it’s all over the place. *[pause]*

God is called our Father.¹

¹ A reference to Matthew 6:9.

We are called children of God, and members of the household of God.² *[pause]*

That’s not all, Paul called himself a “father” of the Corinthians, and called people like Timothy his “beloved child.”³ *[pause]*

These people were not biological relatives, but spiritual ones. *[pauseeee]*

When Jesus’ mother and brothers were looking for him, Jesus made this statement...

“Who are my mother and my brothers?”

And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.’⁴ *[pauseee]*

Clearly, Jesus wants us to know that in Him, we are family.

This isn’t merely a nice, little term of endearment that only makes it *feel* like we are family—no, we *are* family in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

As those who trust in Jesus, we were made children of God, who now have a strong, unbreakable, family link together. *[pauseeee]*

This is reflected in the passage in front of us, for listen to how Paul talks about others here...

He calls Tychicus “the beloved brother.” *[pause]*

Tychicus was a co-worker of Paul, who traveled around with him in some of his missionary journeys.⁵

And he would often be dispatched by Paul to carry letters, communicate messages, or temporarily lead churches.⁶ *[pauseeee]*

Notice how Paul doesn’t simply say “my” beloved brother, but “the” beloved brother. *[pause]*

Tychicus is a beloved brother in Christ to not only Paul, but to the Ephesians.

So this shows us the family relationships that we have in Christ—someone like Tychicus could be called a brother to the Ephesians, even though he wasn’t living with them full-time. *[pauseeee]*

That means that even fellow Christians at a distance can be truly called our brother or sister.

This glorious truth should knit our hearts together with fellow Christians, who live halfway around the globe. *[pauseeee]*

² A reference to John 1:12 & Ephesians 2:19.

³ A reference to 1 Corinthians 4:15 & 2 Timothy 1:2.

⁴ Mark 3:33–35.

⁵ See Acts 20:3–6.

⁶ See Colossians 4:7–8, 2 Timothy 4:12, & Titus 3:12.

When we hear of some struggle of theirs, our hearts should beat with compassion for them.
[pauseeee]

I know that I always enjoy time with our missionaries, who are serving around the world.

When they visit, I start to get to know them, and hear about other brothers and sisters in other regions of the world. *[pause]*

There's something that links us deeply, and it's our relationship as children of God. *[pauseeee]*

The term 'brother' conveys a lot, but Paul makes sure to add 'beloved' to it when talking of Tychicus. *[pause]*

So we are not just to be brothers and sisters, but we are to dearly love, value, and prize one another. *[pauseeee]*

Could you say that other Christians are loved by you? *[pause]*

Are they near and dear to you as family? *[pause]*

Too often our relationships with others in the church are shallow or distant—this ought not to be.

So let's consider how we can grow deeper in our faith-family here at First Baptist. *[pause]*

That's why I've been trying to turn our business meetings more into "family meetings."

I don't want us to think of ourselves as co-workers in a business, but as siblings in a family.
[pause]

I want it to feel like we are a family, who is meeting to make decisions and be informed as to what is going on in the family as a whole, because that's what we really are! *[pauseeee]*

This is also why we as your elders have been trying to teach on going deeper with one another lately.

We are even currently doing our small group study on how we can be real with one another and go deeper in our relationships. *[pause]*

It's important, for it reflects Scripture's teaching. *[pauseeee]*

Come to gather on Sunday's with a mentality of: "I'm going to worship with my family."
[pause]

Look around you and see others as brothers and sisters.

Get to know each other more by inviting each other out to lunch or to do something in the week.

Share your heart with one another, bear one another's burdens,⁷ and love one another with a deep, brotherly love. *[pause]*

In this way, we can start to live in line with the truth that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, more and more. *[pauseeeeeee]*

More family language is found in this passage, for down in verse 23, Paul says, "Peace be to the brothers." *[pause]*

Now the term 'brothers' used here can be used as a general term for both brothers and sisters, and that's why some translations will include 'sisters' when translating verses like these. *[pause]*

Here, Paul is referring to the Ephesian believers, who he considers his spiritual siblings. *[pauseeee]*

Once again, we see the family relationships we have in Christ.

This is no term used to add some 'filler' to the letter, but it's rooted in a spiritual reality. *[pauseeee]*

It's easy to think of our biological family as our only family, but that is mistaken.

We have a family that goes beyond blood, and is instead created through the blood of Christ. *[pauseeee]*

Maybe you are someone who feels like you have a small family—let me tell you today, you have a much *bigger* family than you think!⁸ *[pauseeee]*

Some of you remember Francis McLaughlin, who was a faithful member of this church for many years, until he died about 5 years ago. *[pause]*

Francis didn't have much family.

He told me about growing up in the foster care system, and bouncing around from house-to-house. *[pause]*

Even by the time his life ended, he didn't have much family, but according to Scripture, he had a much bigger family than it looked! *[pauseee]*

He had a church family that loved him and who he loved faithfully through many years of service.

And I still remember the moment when I got the call informing me that he died, and my heart broke. *[pause]*

⁷ Galatians 6:2.

⁸ See Mark 10:29–30.

He wasn't just a friend or a mere fellow church attender, he was family—family in Christ.
[pauseeeee]

Oh, how we need to remember and live out this truth! [pause]

We need to be closer, more loving, more open, more ready-to-share, and more involved in each other's lives! [pauseeee]

What a comfort to know that when I'm struggling with something, I certainly have my biological family that will care for me, but I have a church family that can care for me, too. [pause]

Way too often, the church is a place of shallow, distant, unattached, and rarely-involved-with-each-other relationships.

But the church should actually be the place where you know people deeply and where you are deeply known. [pause]

This can only happen if we first remember that we are brothers and sisters, and then when we start to open up and share with each other, as family members ought to do. [pauseeeee]

Now where do these brother and sister relationships come from? [pause]

They come because we have one Father and one Lord.

Look at what Paul says in verse 23, "Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." [pause]

God the Father is our Father, and we are His children, if we have believed in Christ, the Lord.

Therefore, we are not orphans, but we have an ever-present, always-loving Father in Heaven.
[pauseeee]

God the Father is not distant from His children, or just some "force," but He's someone that you can have a relationship with.

We can relate to Him, and experience the closeness that comes from a relationship as a father with a child. [pauseeee]

The only way that we can have this relationship with God the Father is through Christ the Lord.

For Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." [pauseeee]

The Lord Jesus Christ came and died on the cross for us, and then rose again.

All those who trust in Him gain access to God the Father, for they have been reconciled to Him through faith, and are made His children.

So it's *through* Christ that we are brought into the family of God! *[pauseeee]*

This means that our family relationships in the church are only possible because of our Lord Jesus, who we were saved by and who we love. *[pauseeeee]*

Paul says, “Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.” *[pauseeee]*

A defining mark of a Christian is a love for Christ. *[pauseeeee]*

You can't proclaim that you are a Christian, while harboring a disgust for Christ, for Christians love Christ. *[pauseeee]*

This also means that you can't be apathetic towards Christ, and think that all is well.

For the greatest commandment is the commandment to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”⁹ *[pause]*

That's what we strive to do, and what our hearts beat for.

So evaluate your heart this morning—do you truly love Christ? *[pause]*

I didn't ask if you loved him *perfectly*, but *truly*. *[pauseeeee]*

Our love for Christ is to be “with love incorruptible.” *[pause]*

That word ‘incorruptible’ is a word that refers to things “not subject to decay, dissolution, [or] interruption.”¹⁰ *[pause]*

So this means that true Christians love Christ with a sincere, undying love. *[pauseeee]*

Time does not eat away at our love for Christ, nor does trial wear it down, so that it disintegrates.

No, we faithfully live for the Lord and love our Lord. *[pauseeee]*

It's because of Jesus that we are brothers and sisters together, and so that means that...

II. We are to care for each other.

Have you ever talked to someone new about something, and then you didn't see them for a while...

But when you saw them again, they remembered your name and asked you a question about what you guys talked about? *[pause]*

⁹ Mark 12:30.

¹⁰ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 155. (Punctuation slightly changed.)

We are astonished when that happens, and it impacts our hearts that they would remember specific things about us, like our name and what we are going through. *[pause]*

This is because no one likes being ignored or overlooked, but remembered and cared for.

Well Paul's writings here at the end of his letter show us that care for one another should be normal among us. *[pause]*

Paul states that he will send Tychicus to the Ephesians, so that they can hear how he is doing and be encouraged. *[pause]*

This points to the fact that Paul knew that the Ephesians were eager to hear how he and his co-workers were doing.

In fact, the evidence shows that they were greatly *concerned* for Paul. *[pause]*

Paul was in prison and they were tempted to be discouraged about this, for earlier in the letter, Paul said, "I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you..."¹¹ *[pause]*

When you really want to know how someone is doing, it shows a deep care for them. *[pause]*

Don't you feel loved when you hear that someone was asking about how you were doing? *[pause]*

Do you care for other believers like that, do you want to know how they are doing? *[pause]*

Let's say that another person here at First Baptist isn't here for a couple weeks.

Do you reach out to them to see how they are doing and if they need anything? *[pause]*

If people can just fall through the cracks, then that is a sign that we *aren't* caring for one another, as we should.

And each of us is tasked with this, not just a few. *[pause]*

We each should be caring for each other, wanting to know how they are doing. *[pause]*

What if they are struggling with something—don't you want to be a help? *[pause]*

What if they are sick—don't you want to see if they have any needs? *[pause]*

What if they have been hurt by something—don't you want to be a part of helping them find healing, or play a part in the reconciliation process? *[pause]*

Back in Paul's day, they had to wait for letters or messengers, which took a while to get there, but now think of the myriad of ways that we can hear from others. *[pause]*

¹¹ Ephesians 3:13.

Do we take advantage of our modern-day methods? *[pauseeee]*

So the Ephesians showed care for Paul in wanting to hear how he was doing, but Paul likewise showed care back in that he wanted to share how *he* was doing, to encourage their hearts.

[pause]

This is the give-and-take of relationships.

We share and they share, we care and they care—that’s the way it’s supposed to be. *[pauseeee]*

Paul intentionally thought about others, even though he was in prison! *[pause]*

If you were in prison, it would be tempting to only think about yourself, for you are the one suffering, yet Paul thought of others.

This whole letter is a testament to that, for he wrote it from prison! *[pauseeee]*

Also, in sending Tychicus, Paul made a sacrifice, for now he wouldn’t be able to have his co-worker to help him personally. *[pause]*

Tychicus would be gone for a while delivering this letter and conveying a message, but that’s what care for others does: it sacrifices in love.

And that’s exactly what Tychicus was doing, too—he sacrificed his time and life for the Ephesians. *[pause]*

Little do we think about the fact of how long it would take to travel back then, but also the risk involved.

There were shipwrecks or bandits along the way, among other dangers. *[pause]*

Truly, Tychicus was a “faithful minister in the Lord,” who cared for his brothers and sisters in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

Do you think of others? *[pause]*

Do you sacrifice for them, or is your life all about *you*? *[pauseeee]*

Care for others is shown in sacrificial, others-focused acts.

So are you willing to sacrifice some time, energy, or effort for others in this church? *[pause]*

Are you willing to sacrifice your comfort or even your resources?

Love says, “I’m willing for you.” *[pauseeeee]*

As I mentioned earlier, Paul wanted Tychicus to share everything that was going on with him and his ministry to encourage the Ephesians.

He didn't want them to fret in the uncertainty, but to calm their fears. *[pauseeee]*

Texting a family member when you arrive safely somewhere is an example of this...

We calm their fears and encourage their hearts by sharing with them that we made it safely.

So also, Paul sought their encouragement—he cared enough to do that. *[pauseeee]*

Let's say that you are going through some sort of trial. *[pause]*

If you have fellow church members who are concerned for you, do you show care for their concerned hearts by giving them updates? *[pause]*

Doing so can be an encouragement to them. *[pauseeee]*

The encouragement that the Ephesians would hear wouldn't just be due to hearing about Paul's well-being, but it would also be due to hearing how God was at work through Paul's ministry.

For they would hear how even though Paul was in chains, the gospel was not chained.¹²

And this comforts our hearts and causes us to rejoice! *[pauseeee]*

This is often the case for me when our missionaries come through like one of our missionaries, Seth Stokes, did a couple weeks ago.

We were encouraged as we heard how he and his family were doing, but we were also encouraged as we heard how God is at work on the far side of the globe. *[pauseeee]*

Our care for others is seen in our desire to hear how they are doing, inform them, encourage their hearts, and also, in our desire for God to bless them. *[pauseeee]*

Paul asks that God would give them peace, love, and grace.

These things can ultimately only come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. *[pauseeee]*

We want people to experience physical healing, physical comfort, or physical safety.

There's nothing inherently wrong with those things, but those things cannot be our main or only desire for others. *[pause]*

Like Paul, our main prayer-desires for others should be for them to have a deepening experience of peace, love, and grace from God.

Now that's care for others. *[pauseeee]*

These final verses in the letter of Ephesians teaches us that...

¹² A reference to 2 Timothy 2:9.

The church is to be a close, loving family in Christ.

How Paul communicates with the Ephesians shows us how Christians are to relate to one another...

We are to be a close, loving family because we *are* family in Christ. *[pause]*

Through Christ's loving, sacrificial, redemptive work on the cross, all those who trust in Him are made children of God and so brought into the family as brothers and sisters. *[pauseeee]*

That means that our relationships should reflect the reality of what Christ has made us...

We are family, so let's act like it! *[pauseeee]*

Our world is increasingly becoming shallow, solitary, and distant when it comes to relationships.

We can buy almost everything we need without interacting with another person. *[pause]*

Most things are now automated or online, but in the church, we are called to have solid, caring relationships. *[pause]*

We are to be a place that shines forth with true, deep community amidst a culture of shallow, impersonal, infrequent interactions. *[pauseeee]*

Life isn't all about efficiency and ease—it's not just a task-list to be done. *[pause]*

We are not to relate to others in ways where we use them to get something, or talk to them just because we have to, in order to get somewhere else.

But we are to relate to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, who love and care for each other. *[pauseeee]*

In a world that's all about efficiency, ease, and to-do lists...

In a world that's shallow, solitary, and impersonal, we can relate to one another in ways that say, "I care about *you*, not just what I can get out of you, and not just to get somewhere else." *[pause]*

It will take our time, sacrifice, energy, and effort, but it's worth it, for it's what God has called us to in love.

And it reflects His personal, loving care of us, for God didn't send a robot to come to us and be with us—no, He Himself came in the person of Jesus Christ. *[pause]*

He came to be with us, but also, to die for us, and then rise again, so that we can live with Him forever, not just individually, but as His family together.