

PHILEMON

Lesson 7: "OUR"

12 February, 2016

"Timothy our brother" (Vs. 1).

"Philemon our dearly beloved." (Vs. 1).

"our beloved Apphia" (Vs. 2).

"God our Father" (Vs. 3).

"our Lord Jesus Christ" (Vs. 25).

Many Christians attend church without recognizing the importance of the unity of the body. They view their church experience as an individual participant. They are not able to fully participate and therefore can never know the full joy and blessing that could be theirs if they would instead view themselves as a part of a larger unit known as the church (Matthew 16:18) and count themselves as part of "our" church.

All national, racial, and social divisions are erased within the body of Christ (Gal. 3:28). Paul was a Jew, Timothy was half Jew/half Greek, but they were brothers in Christ along with Philemon. Onesimus was a slave and a prisoner owned by Philemon, but in Christ he is counted as a brother. We need to learn to love all the brethren equally. Until we do that, we'll be lacking the blessings that God wants us to enjoy.

Christians benefit from one another as they meet together in love. Correction and discipline is welcomed when it comes from a brother or sister that you know loves you and cares for you and wants to see you do well. Christians who isolate themselves from other Christians are missing the benefits they could receive from others—and they're withholding benefits that others could receive from them.

"**Our fellowsoldier.**" We stand together in a common fight against evil. We stand together when a brother or sister falls in battle (spiritually or physically). We never leave a soldier behind; they are one of us. Also, we ought to be glad whenever we see other Christian groups serving our Lord. Jesus said, "**He that is not against us is for us**" (Luke 9:50, Mark 9:40). One local church can't reach the world alone. If another church is leading people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, rejoice and pray for them. They are fellow soldiers.

We need to remember that our missionaries are our fellow soldiers. They are counting on us to keep them supplied for the mission God has appointed them to.

“Our Lord Jesus Christ” (Vs. 25)—is in every believer. Sometimes we forget that this includes our wife and children if they are saved. Sometimes we treat someone in the church with less respect than others. If we’ll keep in mind that every Christian has the same Lord Jesus Christ—and they’re indwelt by the same Holy Spirit,—it would certainly improve the way we treated others.

“To the church—in thy house” (vs. 2). —Some use this verse as a “proof text” that Christians are supposed to have church in their house—or that church is limited to teaching their immediate family at home. Others use this verse as an excuse not to fellowship with other believers. Philemon opened his house to the church (the assembled believers in his location) either by necessity or convenience, not by commandment. We cannot make a doctrine about house churches based on this verse.

The keynote of this verse is **“to the church.”** Any place a group of believers can find to assemble is acceptable. Many church groups begin in a private home, and then move to a storefront space or an old movie theater. When the congregation grows enough to support the purchase of a church building, they can do that. But “the church” is not about the building. It’s about the assembled congregation of believers.

ROMANS 16:4-5 In verse 4, Paul mentions “the churches of the Gentiles,” but doesn’t mention anything about the particular type of meeting place where they gather. It’s not important.

In verse 5, Paul singles out one church, which meets in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (vs. 3) because that is who he is greeting and thanking in this passage.

Consider how much closer you would be with the brethren if they came to your house for fellowship every week. You would certainly grow in grace, love, longsuffering, and patience in such a situation.

HEBREWS 10:24-25 Our purpose for fellowshiping together is to “provoke;” to push one another to love the Lord, to love the brethren, and to do good works (vs. 24).

Notice that we are to assemble “OUR-selves together” (vs. 25). If it’s just “you” coming to “your” church, you’ve got nothing invested in the others. That makes it easy for you to walk away.

But when we assemble OURSELVES, there is a bond there that is hard to break because we’re all committed to each other; dependent upon each other; leaning upon each other; trusting in each other. Much more can be accomplished for Jesus Christ in such a church.
