

## **The Black Sheep of the Family**

During Jesus' ministry He had done some amazing things and had made some startling claims. Meanwhile Jesus' family was watching from the sidelines. Try and put yourself in their sandals for a minute. Your brother has hundreds, maybe thousands of people following Him around. These people are leaving their homes, and listening to everything He says. He is changing the Jewish laws and going against the establishment, and others are beginning to hate Him. Has He gone too far? According to Mark's account they thought He was crazy, and they felt they had better take Him home and protect Him from harm. They couldn't get to Him because of the many people, so they sent word to Jesus that they were there. Jesus loved them, but Jesus was looking at a much larger family. Today, everyone still has the opportunity to be part of His family. Not everyone is. Not everyone is a child of God. In Mark 3:35 Jesus said, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." We are not part of His family if we simply know of Him, or if we have occasional contact with Him, or if we go to church, or if we hang around with others who know Jesus. Jesus said only those who do His will.

Another word for the family of God today is the "church." The "church" is not a building, nor is it all the people who are sitting in a building. The church is a collection of people who are doing the will of God. What can we do to make our church family what God would have it to be? 1. Gather together. 2. Pray. 3. Speak the word with boldness. 4. Maintain the unity and not break it. 5. Share what we have with those who do not have. 6. Tell people about Jesus' resurrection, and how they can too. 7. Live keenly aware of God's abundant Grace and cease to complain.

A little old lady was amazed at how nice the young man was next door. Every day he would help her gather things from her car or help her in her yard. One day the old lady finally asked the young man, "Son, how did you become such a fine young man?" The young man replied, "Well, when I was a boy, I had a drug problem." The old lady was shocked, "I can't believe that." The young man replied, "It's true, my parents drug me to church on Sunday morning, drug me to church on Sunday night and drug me to church on Wednesday night." His parents were smart people who knew what was best for their son. You see, in the church he had a bunch of new brothers and sisters. If you become a part of God's family, you will too. It requires a radical commitment, but it has radical benefits.

*Roy Goodlet is a retired minister and a member of Murphy Church of Christ. Email him @ royfcc@yahoo.com.*