

## The Messenger

*By Phillip Rutledge*

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### Thank God for Summer... and Family

"In the good old summer time" – is a line from an old song. Can you hear the tune in your head? If so, I presume you're 50+. If you're younger and don't know the song, picture instead, being at a live summer concert – outdoors, on a hot summer night. Oh, the sweet memories of summer. Those warm breezes, lazy days, holiday travel – and time with family.

Summer seems to be conducive to family reunions. My wife and I recently celebrated our annual family get-togethers. As you might guess, family is high on our priority list so no matter what else we have going, we find time to get together. The Rutledge reunion in its present form was conceived twenty one years ago. Prior to the death of our parents in 1988 my sister, brothers and I instinctively gravitated to the family home in Woodstock for impromptu reunions. Mom and Dad's home was where we congregated. We would find out through the proverbial "grape vine" that some of the more distant siblings were going to be there so the rest of us would just go, too. However, after mom and dad's passing, we knew we would have to make more formal plans to gather or we'd likely find ourselves drifting apart – something we didn't want to see happen. Formal plans were established to reunite because family was (and is) important.

Christians too are part of a family... a big family. It's known as the body of Christ – the church. I believe God loves us so much that he hard-wired us to be a family, biologically and spiritually.

#### **We are all God's Children**

**1 John 3:1 (NIV)** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! Being God's children makes us family.

We share many of the same "family" traits as biological families, some good... but because we're human, some maybe not so good. Just like keeping any family together, it requires one's presence and we need to work at it. The more support, encouragement, compassion, forgiveness, grace and mercy we can offer; the more loving the family. These attributes don't come from within though; they come from above. From a Father whose love surpasses all understanding, from his Son who gave the ultimate sacrifice in order that you and I might be saved; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

If you belong to a spiritual family now – praise God! I encourage you to share that feeling by helping someone less fortunate; invite them into God's home. Trust me; the Holy Spirit will be there to help you.

**Galatians 6:9-11 (NIV)** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

If your family feels distant or dysfunctional, if you feel lost and alone... then come and meet my Father. He can offer you hope, healing and peace when it is needed the most. Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. I will give you rest."

Trust me; you have a family and a Father waiting to welcome you.

S.D.G.

Your thoughts or comments are always welcomed. My email address is [TheMessenger@staidansministries.com](mailto:TheMessenger@staidansministries.com)