



# God Centered Growth

First Baptist Church of Norton

July 10, 2018  
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(This week's devotional is from [ruralrev.net](http://ruralrev.net))

## All in the Family

While I am certainly no scholar of social customs in the biblical era, I get the impression that few things were as important as family. One's place of residence, one's trade, one's prospects for marriage, and so much more were largely determined by the family into which one was born and the strength of one's family connections. And therefore, it must have come as something of a surprise to those who heard the teaching of Jesus when he "relativized" family by defining it in an unexpected way.

As today's gospel lesson ([Matthew 12:43-50](#)) tells it, Jesus was teaching inside a house when he was notified that his mother and brothers were outside, wanting to speak with him. But Jesus pointed to his disciples and said, "'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother'" (verses 49-50).

For better or worse, I'm not sure that family provides the same kind of "organizing center" in our day that it did back in first century Palestine. This, of course, is not to say that family no longer matters; just that increased mobility, changing norms, and a host of other pressures have made it less determinative of our formation and our future. Then, too, we have often replaced or supplemented family with other groupings and networks that define us. Race, class, political affiliation, church membership and other social networks frequently serve to give us a sense of identity — often to our benefit — but sometimes in ways that close our eyes to the broader things that God is doing in us and in the world.

And yet, doesn't the word of Jesus still invite us to examine the connections on which our lives are based and from which we draw meaning? "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my family," he says. And whether we're talking about the members of our local church or the members of God's global Church, we have both the opportunity and the responsibility to have our lives shaped by the only family that we're promised will endure.

I'm grateful today for family: my "nuclear" and "extended" family, my local church family, and the worldwide family of faith. None of my families are perfect; and yet, at their best, they have taught me (and continue to teach me) what it means "to do the will of my Father in heaven." And I can only pray that I am helping my mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles to learn the same lessons.

What "families" have shaped and are shaping you today? And how does your adoption into THE Family change your outlook on what life's about?

May we love and serve "The Family" today. And may our will become our Father's will, as we expand His kingdom embrace in our hearts, in our lives, and in our world.

## Prayer requests for this week:

- The body of Hector Perez, the young man from Coeburn who drowned in Douglas Lake, was found last night.
- Charlie Osborne continues to have health concerns (Rodger Greer).
- Courtney Wells, Linda Walker's niece
- Bob and Sue Hobbs (Kathy Osborne)

## Praises:

- Anne Newlun, Jim Stanley, and Jean Graham are all doing much better (June Jones).
- Jean Spradlin's oldest son, Ben, is now engaged to his longtime girlfriend, Rhonda.



"Oh Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?

How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand?

Turn and answer me, O Lord my God! Restore the light to my eyes, or I will die.

Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, 'We have defeated him!' Don't let them rejoice at my downfall.

But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

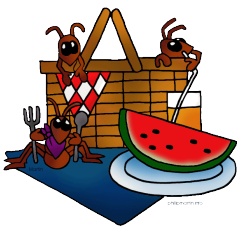
I will sing to the Lord, because he has been so good to me."



Psalm 13



The church will attend *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* outdoor drama as a group on Friday, July 27. We'd like to get the group rate, so please let Linda Walker know if you plan to attend. The church may rent a bus so all can ride together.



**Annual Church Picnic**  
**August 12 ~ 11 a.m. ~ Camp Bethel**  
**Canoeing, kayaking, swimming, tubing**  
**And of course EATING!**

**Bring your favorite dish to share, and a friend or two.**



**As you pray this week,  
please remember the  
following.**

David & Jewell Ball  
Charlene Bates  
Libby Bowman  
Jack Breeding  
Gail Buchanan  
Jim Campbell  
Jim & Sherry Collie  
Linda Cooke  
Tim Cox  
Rhonda Elliott  
Wayne Harrison  
Emma Harrod  
Alana Hash  
Sue Hobbs  
Rosalind Hunt  
Wanda Jenkins  
Elee Large  
Maddie Lewis  
Eugene Mullins  
Charlie Osborne  
Tracy Ott  
Donna Owens  
Roberta Owens  
Leah Riley  
Margaret Riner  
Bea Simmons  
Chris Stidham  
Tammy Sturgill  
Marilyn Teasley  
Joseph Thomas  
Beverly Viers  
Susan Gillenwater Wells  
Brenda Whitaker  
Little Ed Withrow  
Our country's leaders  
First responders, volunteers  
Armed Services men and women  
Missionaries  
Nursing home patients



Please send prayer requests to  
[lindawellswalker@yahoo.com](mailto:lindawellswalker@yahoo.com)



happy anniversary

18 ~ Fred & Lynn Ramey

27 ~ Mark & Leigh Clark



3 ~ CAROL HOWARD

11 ~ ADDIE MULLINS

15 ~ DAVID BALL

17 ~ SYDNEY FLEMING

18 ~ BAILEY RUSSELL

26 ~ DANIEL WALKER

27 ~ EUGENE MULLINS

27 ~ LUANN WALKER

**First Baptist Church of Norton** gives anyone the chance to come together and worship with like-minded congregants as members of a strong, loving community. Whether you're looking for peace of mind, a way to give back, or simply want to be a part of a loving family — First Baptist Church of Norton welcomes you. Join our community, and start your journey to God-centered growth with us!

### How to join FBC Norton

- Baptism—You desire to express faith in Christ through baptism.
- Transfer—You wish to transfer membership from another church.
- Statement of Faith—You are a baptized believer and come on statement of faith.
- Watch Care—You would like to be connected to our church family without official membership.

### Deacons

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.fbcnorton.com](http://www.fbcnorton.com) or  
connect with us on  
Facebook.

Or better yet, come and visit  
us in person!



This newsletter is published every Tuesday morning on the church's web page. Please send news, photos, and announcements to [cornettdiane@gmail.com](mailto:cornettdiane@gmail.com).