

FAMILIES

They say you can choose your friends but not your family. Or so the saying goes.

But who is our family? No one is ever born into life alone. Everyone has shared the bond of family, at least at birth. For many people it is a bond that will follow them throughout life. For many people it is the most important bond of all.

We may not always get on with everyone in our family particularly the more extended families with cousins, great-aunts and -uncles and not to mention in-laws!

The one thing which this extended period of lockdowns and restrictions has taught us is not to take anything for granted and this extends to families probably more than anything else. How many birthdays, anniversaries, awards, graduations and sadly, in some cases, funerals have we missed by not being able to travel and see families face to face. Zoom is great but it doesn't beat the real thing.

The Hollies had a hit many years ago with "He ain't heavy; he's my brother.

When you read the lyrics you could easily replace the word brother with sister, mother, father, son, daughter, friend, colleague or stranger. Sometimes I and probably others are guilty of losing track of what is important in our lives and if we stop and read simple words like these lyrics to see how important our families really are, be they big or small, near or far. The words are just as relevant now, if not more so, than ever before

*The road is long
With a many a winding turn
That leads us to who knows
where
Who knows where

But I'm strong
Strong enough to carry him
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

So on we go
His welfare is of my concern*

*No burden is he to bear
We'll get there

For I know
He would not encumber me
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

If I'm laden at all
I'm laden with sadness
That everyone's heart
Isn't filled with the gladness
Of love for one another*

*It's a long, long road
From which there is no return
While we're on the way to there
Why not share

And the load
Doesn't weigh me down at all
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

He's my brother
He ain't heavy, he's my brother
He ain't heavy, he's my brother*

In the same way, we can sometimes lose sight of the family of God. There is no distinction or privilege in that family, we are all equal regardless of age, gender, colour, nationality, rich or poor. We are all the children of God in one big family, brought about by *new birth*.

Those who are born again, are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man — but of God" John 1: 13



BIBLE PASSAGES

Proverbs 22:6

1 John 3:1-2

1 John 4:20

PRAYER

Bless our families; mothers, fathers, daughters, sons. Protect them from all that might harm. Prosper them in times of hardship. Instruct them in the ways of goodness. Prepare them for both joy and sorrow. Unite them within your family.

Lord, we pray that you would embrace your loving arms around our families and friends to keep them protected, secured, and loved. Amen.