

# **COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCH**

## **THE SERMONS**

**FALL 2006**

**By  
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## INTRODUCTION

**We BELONG to the church. But what is the church?**

**This is a series of sermons designed to give us a deeper understanding of the work and nature of the church.**

**In this sermon series, Dr. Orozco takes a look at the major Biblical motifs for the church: ARMY, FAMILY, TEAM, and FARM. From these metaphors Dr. Orozco gleans sixteen principles (four from each motif) that define the WORK of the church (what the church was created to do) and the NATURE of the church (what the church was created to be).**

**From these basic principles Dr. Orozco paints a portrait of the church and identifies an overarching metaphor that encompasses all of the characteristics of the church and serves as a model for how the church operates and exists.**

**If you want a deeper understanding of what it means to BELONG to the church you should do the following:**

- 1. Listen to all four sermons in this sermon series.**
- 2. Print out this Sermon Guide, read it before each sermon, and take notes.**
- 3. Attend an ABF during the sermon series. The ABF lessons will discuss this subject in more depth.**
- 4. Go to Pastor Ellis' blog ([www.elliso.typepad.com](http://www.elliso.typepad.com)) and download the E-Book entitled, *The Church*.**
- 5. Go to Pastor Ellis' blog ([www.elliso.typepad.com](http://www.elliso.typepad.com)), find the CATEGORIES section and click on THE CHURCH. There you will find an ongoing discussion of these principles and how they can be applied to the life and work of the church.**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Ellis Orozco was born in Houston, Texas. He is a graduate of South Houston High School in Pasadena, Texas (1980). He holds a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas (1986). He also earned an M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas (1993), and a D.Min. from George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University in Waco, Texas (2004). He was the pastor of Corpus Christi Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Texas from 1993-1999. He has been the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen, Texas from 1999-present. He is married to Priscilla and they have three children.**

**THE ARMY**  
**Ephesians 6:10-13**

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2006**

**INTRODUCTION**

The minute you become a Christian you are thrown into an epic battle against evil. It is a battle in which Satan is constantly attacking. You need several things to win the battle. You need to arm yourself. You need to protect yourself. You need to know who the enemy is. And finally, you need others. The Church is an army that sticks together and, through the power of God, changes the world for good.

Paul describes the battle that the church faces when he calls on each Christian to put on the “full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:11). He goes on to describe this armor as the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Each of the most important elements of the Christian life (and life as the church) are listed in terms of military paraphernalia (Ephesians 6:13-17).

In addition, Paul reminds us that the church’s battle is not against other human beings (flesh and blood), but against the rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world and against the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

Here are some basic principles about the church that we learn from the ARMY model:

1. The church is in a global and epic battle against Satan and his reign of evil.
2. The church is under constant and aggressive attack from Satan and his powerful allies.
3. The church was created and equipped for this battle.
4. Ultimately, the battle will be won by the power of God.

**THE ARMY**  
**Ephesians 6:10-13**

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2006**

**SERMON NOTES**

**THE FAMILY**  
**1 Corinthians 12:1-26**

**SEPTEMBER 17**

**INTRODUCTION**

Jesus establishes the church (his followers) as family when he says, “Whoever does the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50). This leaves little doubt that Jesus saw his disciples as his personal family. It’s not that he disowned his own family. Even on the cross he was caring for his mother (John 19:26-27). It’s just that he saw his spiritual family as taking the highest priority. In the end, the two were almost indistinguishable.

The other New Testament writers pick up on this motif. Paul encourages us to carry each others burdens the way you would in a family. He tells us to do good to all people, but “especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Ephesians 6:10). He acknowledges that we derive our name from God and are, therefore, his family (Ephesians 3:14-15).

The writer of Hebrews tells us that the one who makes us Holy (God) and the ones who are made holy (the church), are of the same family. For that reason Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers (Hebrews 2:10-13). Peter tells us that we are not to be ashamed to bear the name of Jesus. It is because of his name that we are part of the family of God (1 Peter 4:16-17). John refers to the church as a “chosen sister” (2 John 1:13).

The Scriptures are replete with comparisons of the church to organisms and familial relationships. Here are some basic principles about the church that we learn from the FAMILY model:

1. The church is to exhibit the love, care, honor, loyalty, and intimacy that are found in healthy family relationships. We are to take care of each other.
2. The church is to fully accept anyone that God calls family. We don’t choose our brothers or sisters or parents ... we are simply called to love and honor them.
3. The church, as a living organism, needs to be fed, nurtured and encouraged in its quest to fulfill its reason for existence.
4. The church, as a living organism, has a reason for living and a mission to fulfill.

**THE FAMILY**  
**1 Corinthians 12:1-26**

**SEPTEMBER 17**

**SERMON NOTES**

**THE TEAM**  
**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

**SEPTEMBER 24**

**INTRODUCTION**

Jesus did not speak directly to the metaphor of athletics, but we do see the idea of team and working as a team in his ministry. He sends his disciples out “two-by-two” to do ministry in the villages (Mark 6:7-13). When they return, he calls them “together” so that they can debrief and spend time with the father (Luke 9:10). He speaks repeatedly to the importance of unity within the group and, in the end, he prays most earnestly for this unity (John 17:23).

The concept of athletics is developed in more detail by the apostle Paul. The most common form of athletics was track and field ... it was the race. Paul talks about the Christian life in the church as the running and finishing of a race (Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 9:24; Galatians 2:2; Galatians 5:7; 2 Timothy 4:7). Paul compares the Christian life to a boxing match (or more likely a gladiator battle), when he speaks to the strategic nature of the work (1 Corinthians 9:26). There is a discipline (1 Corinthians 9:27) and a persistence (Philippians 3:14) necessary to finishing the race or winning the fight. Ultimately, Paul is satisfied to have finished the race and the good fight (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7).

Paul uses the language of the gymnasium when he exhorts the church to train themselves to be godly (1 Timothy 4:7-8), and to follow the rules so as to not be disqualified after having run (2 Timothy 2:5). Paul emphasizes the importance of the unity of teamwork (Ephesians 4:16-17) so that the church will reach her potential and fulfill her mission. John echoes Paul’s words (3 John 1:3-8), as does the writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 12:1).

Here are some basic principles about the church that we learn from the TEAM model:

1. The church experiences spiritual growth (success) when operating in unity, like a team.
2. Christ is the head of the Church. He alone is the captain of the team.
3. The life of the Church is like a race that requires discipline and training to gain victory.
4. The common goal of the team is to run a good race, cross the finish line, and gain the reward.

**THE TEAM**  
**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

**SEPTEMBER 24**

**SERMON NOTES**

## **THE FARM**

### **Matthew 13:1-23**

**October 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It was natural for the biblical writers to make comparisons to plowing, sowing, planting, pruning and harvesting because their entire world revolved around these activities. Their calendars were marked by the seasons and by the times of planting and harvesting.

Jesus, for instance, described the Kingdom of God like a man sowing a field. The seed falls on all kinds of ground. Only the seed that falls on good soil takes root and becomes productive (Matthew 13:1-23). He describes the Kingdom of God as a mustard seed that is planted and even though it is a tiny seed, through the mysterious workings of God it becomes a large plant (Matthew 13:31-32).

Jesus, talking to his disciples, looks out at the world and tells them that the “harvest is plentiful” and that we are to pray to the Lord of the harvest for workers to pick the crop (Luke 10:2). He indicates that there are those who sow and those who reap but when the eternal harvest comes those who sow and those who reap rejoice together for the lives that have been saved (John 4:36).

Again, Jesus compares our relationship to Him and to the heavenly Father as the relationship between a vine and its branches. He is the vine and we are the branches so that apart from Him we wither and die (John 15:5).

Paul, picking up on this theme, describes the work that he and Apollos nurtured in Corinth, commenting that it was he who planted the seed and Apollos who watered it, but it is ultimately God who makes it grow (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Here are some basic principles about the church that we learn from the FARM model:

1. The church has some very hard work to do. The church has been given the specific spiritual task of sowing, planting, and harvesting.
2. The church has the responsibility of preparing the soil, planting the seed, watering the plants, and harvesting the fruit at the appropriate time.
3. The church can only function when it is connected to Jesus. When we take our focus away from Jesus we begin to wither and die.
4. The church must understand its relationship to Jesus and learn to recognize His voice. The church’s work is to hear and obey Jesus.

**THE FARM**  
**Matthew 13:1-23**

**October 1**

**SERMON NOTES**