

Ephesians 2:18-22

Access

- 18/For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
- Because we have been brought near, we now have access to the Father
- Access = freedom of entry

Three analogies

1/A State (19)

- 'Fellow citizens with the saints' = with all God's people
- Think about great saints...

2/A family (19)

- Just as we are members of a human family, so we are members of God's family
- This is an extended family, not a nuclear family...

3/A temple (21)

- Not *hieron* = building but *naos* = holy place cf 1 Cor 6:19,20; 2 Thess 2:4).

The foundation (20)

- Apostles and prophets (1 Cor 12:28; Ep 3:5; 4:11).
- Some say this means Old and New Testaments
- More likely it refers to contemporary apostles and prophets (who were widely recognised until the third century—see patristic writings such as the Shepherd, the Didache)

The cornerstone (20)

- Christ is the cornerstone ('the stone placed at the extreme corner so as to bind the other stones together—the most important stone in the structure; the stone on which its stability depended' - S.D.F. Salmond)
- Both a corner stone and a stumbling stone (Psalm 18:22-24; Isaiah 28:16)

The structure (21)

- The people of God (1 Cor 3:16,17)
- This refers to the local church: 'every structure' rather than 'the whole structure' (Salmond etc)
- In other words, this is true of every local church.
- Each local church is such a holy temple
- Compare Revelation 1:12-20

To be joined together implies

- Preparing
- Cutting
- Shaping
- Trimming
- Sanding
- Fitting

Proverbs 27:17 (ESV)

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

Challenges for us

- Stability: To be part of God's temple means stability and security

- Holiness (19,21). God's temple is a holy temple
- Fullness of the Holy Spirit. God's temple is a dwelling place for the Spirit. Compare mute idols (1 Cor 12:1-3; Psalm 135:15-18)

We all need to be Spirit-filled!

Read Ephesians 2:17-22

1. What is the nature of the peace Jesus brings? (17)
2. Access means right of entry. What analogies can you think of that might help us to understand what it means to have access to the Father? (18)
3. The apostle describes us as 'strangers and aliens' (19). Strangers and aliens to whom?
4. Think about some of the great biblical saints. What does it mean to be 'fellow citizens' with them? (19) Make a list.
5. What is the household of God? (19). Today most households in our country are nuclear or even smaller. In biblical times, extended families were more common. What are the advantages/disadvantages of each? (Some research might be needed here.) Which one best illustrates the household/family of God? You could draw on your own experience here.
6. Where today can we find the foundation of the apostles and prophets? (20) How do we build on it?
7. What can you find out about cornerstones? Why is Jesus called the cornerstone? (20)
8. What happens to the stones, timbers etc of a building when it is being erected? What comparisons can you draw with what happens to us as we are built into God's temple? (21)
9. Elsewhere the human body is called a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19,20). So is the local church (1 Cor 3:16,17). How are these two ideas connected?
10. What sort of differences are there between the temple of the local church and heathen temples? Make a list.
11. Your local cell group is a microcosm of the temple of the church. If the Spirit indwells your cell group, what do you expect to happen? Why?