

ATMOSPHERE

No group on earth is more blessed than the Lord's church! "According to His abundant mercy," God Himself, "has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 1:3). He reserves for us "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled," an inheritance "that does not fade away" (1 Peter 1:4).

Through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, "...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness..." (2 Peter 1:1-3). He has given us "exceedingly great and precious promises..." (2 Peter 1:4). He has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

Every time we meet, we assemble as the redeemed. We come together as the chosen. We gather as those who have been adopted by God, welcomed into His family through the gift of His Son (Ephesians 1:3-12).

We worship together in an atmosphere permeated by faith, hope, and love. We sing with grace in our hearts. We teach and encourage one another because the word of Christ dwells richly within us (Colossians 3:16). God accepts "the sacrifice of praise...that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15). He accepts our worship because we have turned our hearts toward Him. As we worship and live under the authority of Jesus, God makes us ever more thankful for each opportunity to serve (Colossians 3:17).

Even before we come to worship, we prepare our hearts through prayer. We think fondly of one another, anticipating each occasion "to stir up love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). We examine our lives so that we can commune with the Lord and with our brethren in the joy of a pure faith. We purpose in our hearts to give willingly and joyously to God (2 Corinthians 9:6-9).

No group on earth is more blessed than the Lord's church! When the saints meet, God meets with us. He is our joy. He is our hope. He is our life. What an atmosphere of victory and growth! --Bill Bagents