

Devotion.
17 August 2016

Simply be the children of God

Let's learn about faith and trust from the children around us. Let's celebrate their spontaneity, love and simple trust. Let's do what we can to protect them from that which would mislead them - let's give them much more of ourselves than of technology, entertainment and materialism-driven gifts.

"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me", Jesus said. Matt. 18: 5. *"It is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."* What good news this is! Whoever receives one such child in Christ's Name, receives our Lord. An important part of who we are and what we do as the church, is to receive people here in the name of Jesus Christ.

We receive the children into the household of God, the faith community. Think about how different children are from adults. They do not come to church to do a task or run a project. **They come to church because they can and may be part of God's family. Because God loves them and his grace welcomes them with open arms. They come because they love to be with the Lord and learn about him and praise and worship him.**

And so they remind us of our own status in the Lord's household. It is important for us to be accountable for God's work and to contribute to the work of his Kingdom. *But first of all we are here not because of all the good things we can do, but because of all the good things God has already done for us and wants to do for us.*

We are not here to be equal partners with God. **Instead, we are here as God's children.** We are here as grateful, trusting, believing and faithful children of our heavenly Father. We are here because the grace of God calls us and gathers us here.

The children remind us of whom we all are. When the church forgets that, we forget who we are. We forget that we live by the grace of God alone, and we begin to think that we can live by our own common sense and strength and goodness.

But when we receive a child in the name of Christ, we learn again who we are—the children of God whom Christ has received—and so we are reminded of, and strengthened in, the grace of God.