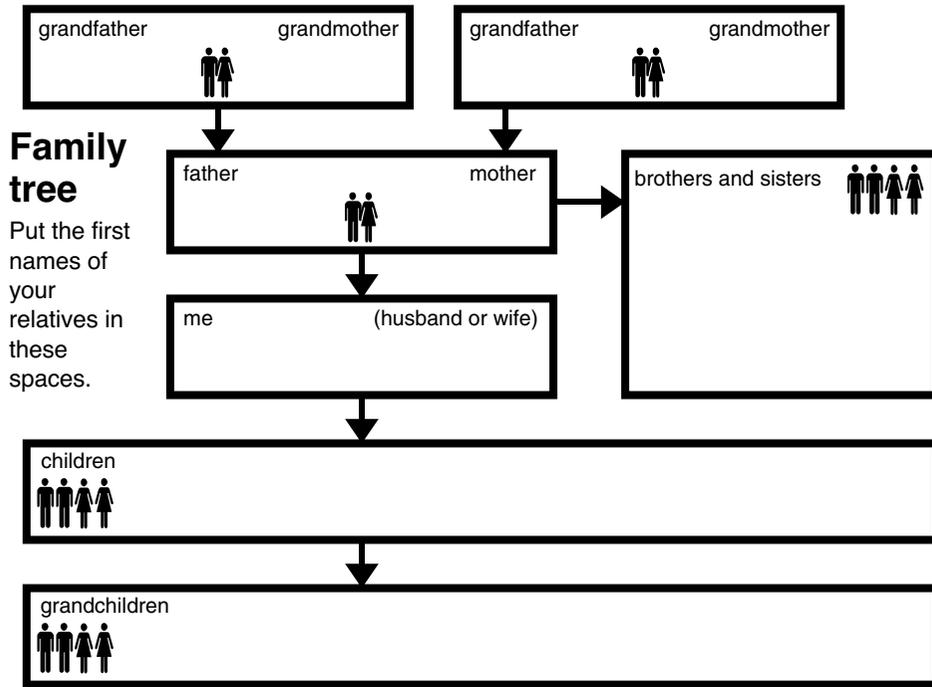


# family

## ● Your family



- How well do you relate to the rest of your family?
- Put a spot ● against all your relatives where you know that God has touched their lives in some way. Can you see God's hand in your family?
- Put a triangle ▲ against all the people who have or have had serious problems in their lives. Pray for those who are still alive.



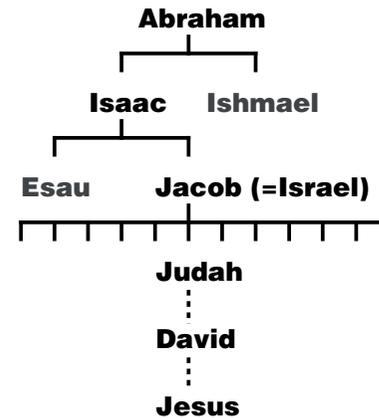
- Are there any positive traits that you can trace through your family?  
 health    long life    wealth    happiness    success    kindness  
 good reputation    family stability   other \_\_\_\_\_

Thank God for the good things which have happened in your family.

- Are there any negative traits that you can trace through your family?  
 illness    poverty    sadness    failure    crime    immorality  
 family strife    divorce    accidents   other \_\_\_\_\_

In the Bible there are families which are under the blessing of God and others which are under a curse for many generations (Ex 20:4-6, Ex 34:6-7). Pray that negative family traits will be destroyed and will not continue in your family line. You can be a starting point for the blessings of God in your family (Lev 26:40)!

The Bible's account of human beings begins with the family of Adam and Eve. Noah and his family are saved from the flood and the rest of the Old Testament is mainly concerned with the family of Abraham.



\* Genesis 12:2-3 \* Genesis 13:14-17  
Find six promises made to Abraham.

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\* Genesis 26:2-5 \* Genesis 28:10-15  
Who else inherited the same blessings?  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

\* Galatians 3:16 Which descendant of Abraham spread his blessing to the rest of the world? \_\_\_\_\_

\* Genesis 49:10 What was God's promise for the family of Judah?

\* 2 Samuel 7:8-16

Whose family in the clan of Judah fulfilled this promise? \_\_\_\_\_

\* Matthew 1:1-17 \* Revelation 11:15

Who is the ultimate fulfilment of this promise? \_\_\_\_\_

Families are important to God and there is plenty of information in the Bible showing how people were related and the purposes of God for families.

Have you ever considered that God might have a purpose for your family?



## ● Families in the Bible

Families were extended and more similar to those we find today in eastern cultures. They included several generations, servants and others incorporated into the household.

Having children was seen as blessing from the Lord, particularly sons who were inheritors and who continued the family line (*Psalms 127:3-5*).

## ● Father

The father is a central character in the family. He is responsible for the conduct of his family and the blessings of God upon it. It is his task to be a good example and to illustrate the fatherhood of God.

What are the responsibilities of a father?

Deut 8:5 _____	2 Chron 26:4 _____
Job 1:1-5 _____	Ps 78:1-8 _____
Ps 103:13 _____	Mark 5:23 _____
Matt 7:9-11 _____	Luke 15:20 _____
2 Cor 12:14 _____	Col 3:21 _____

## ● Mother

The mother shares the leadership of the family and many of the responsibilities above (*Proverbs 31:10-31*). The Bible is full of examples of mothers showing tender sacrificial care for children. This is a vivid illustration of God's tender love for us (*Isaiah 49:15-16, Isaiah 66:13*).



How did these mothers show their love for their children?

Ex 2:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 Sam 2:19 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Matt 15:22 \_\_\_\_\_  
 John 19:25 \_\_\_\_\_

How did these parents go wrong?

Gen 25:28 _____	Gen 27:1-46 _____
Gen 37:3 _____	1 Sam 3:11-14 _____
1 Kings 22:52 _____	2 Chron 22:3 _____
Jer 9:14 _____	

### Hebrew words

- The Hebrew word for "father" is *ab* (so *Abraham* = "father of many", *Abigail* = "my father is joy", *Abijah* = "my father is Yahweh" and the related Aramaic word *Abba*).
- Sometimes the word *ab* is also translated as "family" indicating the strong connection in Hebrew thinking between father and family.
- The word *bayit* which means "house" is also used for "family", for example the "house of David".
- A combination of the two words *bayit* and *ab* is often used for "family" and can be translated as "father's house".

## ● Brothers and sisters

The word brother is used quite widely even for distant relatives. Love, loyalty and support are expected from brothers and sisters (*Proverbs 17:17, 18:24*).

\* **Genesis 4:1-9** \* **Genesis 37:3-11** \* **2 Chronicles 21:4**

What are the main dangers in relationships between brothers or sisters?

Are you a father, a mother, a brother or a sister?

How well do you conduct yourself in your role?

Are there any changes you would like to make for the future?

**Heartsearch**

## ● The family of God

The idea of family is used throughout the Bible.

### • God is a family

God includes father and son and this family relationship is one of his eternal qualities (John 5:19-23, 14:9-13, 16:28, 17:5).

### • As Christians we are children of God

We become children of God when we receive Jesus (John 1:12-13). God is our father (John 20:17, 1 John 3:1). We are adopted into his family (Ephesians 1:5). We are given the Spirit of sonship and can call God "Abba" (Romans 8:15-16). We are co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). Male and female, Jew and Gentile, all receive full rights as sons of God (Galatians 3:26-4:7). We become brothers of Jesus (Matthew 12:49-50, Hebrews 2:10-12).

Some may find it difficult to accept God as father because they have had bad experience of their natural father. This is why we need the Holy Spirit which is the Spirit of sonship to enable us to relate to God as our father.

### • The church is the family of God

Christians address each other as brothers (Acts 1:16, Romans 1:13). Family values of love, loyalty, friendship and support are expected among believers (John 13:34-35, Romans 12:10, James 2:14-17, 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10). Church leaders are called to care for their people as a parent cares for their family with love, care and discipline (Matthew 20:25-28, 1 Corinthians 4:14-17, 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, 1 Timothy 3:4-5).

How do you relate to God as your father?

very good  good  poor  very poor

**Heartsearch**

How are you as a brother or sister in your church?

very good  good  poor  very poor

How do you relate to your church leaders?

very good  good  poor  very poor