FAMILY

 A few weeks ago ,we. like many others, spent time together as family over Christmas. Our family is growing and becoming more diverse. There is a wide range of how we differ from each other, generational, ethnic, abilities, social skills just to mention a few. Yet we are related, we are family. We consider it a wonderful blessing to be able to gather under one roof and spend some time with each person.

Does this also look like our Church Family? It too is diverse in generational, gender, race, abilities and so on and just like in our family gatherings, it is a wonderful blessing to be able to gather under one roof. But to spend some time with each person that may be asking too much. Then we become defensive and can find all kinds of reasons why that doesn't work. Have you ever stood back and watched as people mingle during the social time at your church? You notice a man standing alone who comes from a local group home, How many people walk right past him without even giving him a glance? You see the young adult who lacks some social skills and almost seems shunned by all.

 This would not happen at you family gathering so why does it happen at the church family? Is it fear of being uncomfortable, or is it because you feel that must be some-one else's job. You could be right, but have you given it some undivided thought? Think about...is he/she really part of my family? Did God bring her here for me to spend time with. Is he here as a challenge for me, or an opportunity. We talk about discerning God's will and this is important. It is also important to discern His will in how we relate to those in our family who have physical, mental and cognitive challenges.

 Many of you who read this are leaders in your churches. We know how important it is in serving, teaching and relating to those in our church family. When I think about God's will for my life I often think about the story of Esther in the Old Testament. Were Mordecai tells Esther to plead mercy for the Jews to the King. "And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such time as this" (Esther 4;14) Think about, why has God placed me here, at this time so that I may serve Him? May it be to build loving relationships not only to those with disabilities, but to all of God's much loved children.

There are many resources on line for you and your church. So that we all become more aware of those who have disabilities and those who care for them. Resources to help us grow into a strong and loving family. https://network.crcna.org/topic/justice-inclusion

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