

They are as thick as thieves, two peas in a pod! They share a single hive mind! They are joined at the hip! These sayings can describe God's people. "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to live together in unity!*" (**Psalm 133:1**). There are different ways to describe this concept, but a more well-known saying is "birds of a feather flock together!" Jesus prayed these precious words for His followers in **John 17:21**: "*that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*" So, it can be said that God's children are birds of a feather. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary says that this "*means that people who are alike tend to do things together.*" And according to the website metaphor.wiki, "*Birds that flock together, will sleep, eat and migrate together and could be described as a bird family.*" Well, the Bible says that the church is the family of God. "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*" (**Galatians 3:26**).

So, if the church is the family of God, what does it mean when one of God's children decides to leave the church? **Proverbs 27:8** says, "*Like a bird that flees its nest is anyone who flees from home.*" The Christian's home on this Earth is the church, where we are surrounded by our family. God gave us the church to rely on and help one another navigate this life and go to heaven together. "Birds of a feather flock together," and God knew that we would need one another to stay faithful until death. We simply cannot navigate this life without our fellow Christians!

So, just as a bird fleeing its nest would not be wise, a Christian fleeing from the church would also be unwise, as it would leave her vulnerable and in danger. The word "*flees*" in **Proverbs 27:8** indicates a conscious choice to abandon the church, which is the Christian's place of safety and security from the world. Leaving the church means leaving Christ, because Christ is the Head, and the church is His body. We know this because **Ephesians 1:22-23** tell us that God the Father "*put all things under His (that is, Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*" And just as one head can only have one body, Christ only has one church. In the same book of **Ephesians**, in **chapter**

4 verses 1-6, God tells us to “*walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*”.

So, what might happen to the Christian who decides to flee from the church? Well, **Hebrews 3:12-14** warns us: “*Take care, brothers and sisters, that there will not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another every day, as long as it is still called ‘today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we keep the beginning of our commitment firm until the end.*” So, IF we depart from the church and thus Christ with an evil heart of unbelief, we WILL be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin whose end is being lost. We will NOT have the safety and protection of Jesus. However, IF we stay within the safety of the church, we become partakers of Christ, meaning we share in His blessings, whose end result is safety and eternal salvation. This is the choice of eternal life or eternal death, and the choice is yours.

So, if you want to be faithful, strong, and secure in the church, you must remain IN the church, as we see from **Proverbs 27:8** that leaving the church can be a risky and dangerous move, just like a bird leaving its safe and secure nest. Comparing the church to a bird in her nest emphasizes the idea of protection and refuge. The church, like a nest, provides a safe haven for its members, offering corporate worship to God, prayer, spiritual nourishment, encouragement, comfort, nurturing, support, teaching and guidance, fellowship, a sense of belonging, and so much more!

The members of the church are like the birds, finding refuge within the nest of the church, being cared for and nurtured within the church. Just as birds grow and develop within their nests, Christians find their faith strengthened and their spiritual lives enriched within the church, as their faith grows and

matures in Christ, where they are connected, supported, encouraged, wrapped in prayer, and protected like chicks huddled together under their mother's wings. The Scriptures paint a beautiful picture of this in **Psalm 91:1-4**. *“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.’ Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.”* If we, as God's children, will seek shelter under His wings, He will be our protective shield. From this passage, we clearly see God's love and care for us IF we are willing to be obedient to Him and run to Him for shelter.

Jesus expounded on this in **Matthew 23:37** as He was lamenting over the great city of Jerusalem. Jesus had longed to gather the children of Jerusalem together under His wings, but heartbreakingly, they were not willing to run to Him for safety and care. In His lament, Jesus cried, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”* Why did Jesus use the analogy of a hen and her chicks in His lament over Jerusalem? Because mother hens are fiercely protective of their young and will use their bodies as a barrier against potential threats. She gathers her chicks under her wings for protection and warmth, as baby chicks are helpless and cannot defend themselves against predators or effectively regulate their body temperatures. When danger approaches, the hen perceives it and will cluck loudly to alert her chicks, who will then instinctively run and gather under her wings for refuge, protection, and comfort. The hen instinctively uses her wings to shield her chicks from predators and insulate them from harsh weather conditions. These instincts of both the hen and chicks are built in by God to help ensure their survival.

Just as the baby chicks have the instinct to run to their mother hen for protection, we, being the children of God, also have the instinct to seek out our Creator. **Ecclesiastes 3:11** tells us that God *“has made everything*

beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” God has set eternity in our hearts, so our innate desire to seek Him out in the hopes of spending an eternity with Him is built in BY Him. And just as baby chicks are made in the image of their hen and rooster parents, we humans are made in the image of our Heavenly Father. *“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”* (**Genesis 1:27**). We are His children, created in His image, and He created in us the innate desire to seek after Him, worship Him, and desire to be with Him in heaven! Of course, we can outright ignore and go against our instincts if we so choose. If only Jerusalem had been willing to run to their Savior for shelter under His wings of protection and safety! But no, they stubbornly rejected Him, which led to their destruction, just as chicks who refuse to shelter under their mother hen’s wings could be eaten by predators or killed by the harsh weather. You know, It can be argued that one of the most powerful things in nature is a mother protecting her young. Think of a mama bear and her cubs. Now, much MUCH more powerful than this, imagine the love that Jesus has for you and how He longs to fiercely protect you as you shelter under His wings.

Ladies, we must rely on Christ for our safety, protection, and care. We are like those helpless baby chicks with Christ as our mother hen. He is clucking to us to run under His wings because, make no mistake, there is a hungry predator nearby, the most dangerous one of all, and he wants to devour you, as **First Peter 5:8** warns, *“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* Will you run with me under His wings for protection? The devil wants to devour you, and he WILL unless you run to the shelter of the wings of Christ for safety. Just like those baby chicks, you are helpless and vulnerable out in the open, but Jesus loves you and longs to gather you under His wings. He is clucking to alert you of danger, calling for you to come to Him for refuge. *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your*

souls. *For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.* ” These are the imploring words of Jesus from **Matthew 11:28-30**. But, He cannot shelter you unless you run to Him! Will you answer His call and come to Him for protection, rest, and life, OR will you be like stubborn Jerusalem and cause Him to lament and mourn over YOU because you will not? He is standing at the door of your heart and knocking; *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me”* (**Revelation 3:20**). Ladies, I plead with you to be those baby chicks who run to Him and shelter under the protective wings of our Savior. His warmth, care and love will protect you from the predators and harsh weather of this sinful world. The one and ONLY place you can take shelter under the Lord’s wings from the lurking dangers of this world and the devil is the church. I want to take shelter under His wings; don’t you?