

# REFLECTION

BLD NEWARK COVENANT COMMUNITY

## WE ARE FAMILY

We in BLD often refer to our community as our second family. Much like our own family, the relationships we develop in community through the times we worship, serve, or minister to one another, build among us bonds so strong that we know that these friendships will stand the test of time.

Throughout human history, the family has been the foundation of society. Within a strong, well-functioning family our physical and emotional needs are fulfilled. Strong family ties provide us the love and security we need for a happy and stable life. However, the reality is that the ravages of sin have broken down the core of the human family. We come to this community from families damaged by divorce, adultery, lack of love, deep-seated division and unforgiveness; but God in His mercy has called us once more to knit us together and give to us the relationships that will bring us closer to Him and to our spiritual and biological brothers and sisters.

***“Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”*** (Mark 3:34-35) By these words, Jesus enables us to understand the foundation of a Christian family. It is our service, love, faith and obedience to the will of the Father that brings us into a relationship with Jesus.

We were called into community early in our married life. Our children were young when we began our walk with God. They grew up in community blessed with the love and support of other like-minded families, where faith is practiced and everybody tries to live by the Word of God. However, it was not till we attended the Family Encounter after many years in community that we learned how self-willed and unloving we had been in the care of our children. Somehow, those years of teachings and spiritual formation have failed to reach our hearts and create in us true Godly parents. Without the prayer covering and the loving and spirit-filled environment of the weekend, we would not have been open to accepting our shortcomings and our children would not have had the opportunity to share with us their feelings, to describe to us the pain and unforgiveness they have kept in their hearts for the lack of opportunity to speak out.

God poured upon our family and all the other families that weekend His loving mercies. He turned hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, He built bridges where there were chasms, and brought healing where there was pain. That encounter weekend was God’s way of making sure our family remains strongly intact. It brought to my mind clearly that we are so broken that it is only God’s grace that carries us through, and that His work in us is constant.