

Family Life Training

The Church as Family

“Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” - 1 Corinthians 8:6

“But as many as did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” - John 1:12

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household (family) of God.” - Ephesians 2:19

The Church is known as the family of God in scripture. It is important that before we discuss family life training we understand this important biblical truth. We have one Father (God) and as believers we are brothers and sisters in the Lord and part of God's family.

Disciples of Christ

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” - Luke 14:26

As important as our individual families are, we must remember that our relationship with God is the most important relationship we have. Jesus didn't mean that we literally *hate* our spouses, children, and parents but that we are to prefer him and give him first place over every earthly relationship. We must be careful not to make an idol of our families when it comes to our relationship with God and following him.

Family Structure

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.” - Ephesians 3:14

Families are composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. God has established our personal families to be a representation of the family of God. Godly homes are to reflect the kingdom of God, Christ's love for his people, and our love for him. Our families should be our first ministry (1 Timothy 5:8). Christian homes should reflect the Gospel to the world and what Godly order in the home looks like.

Husbands & Wives

"Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." - Ephesians 5:31-33

"Likewise, wives be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives...Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way..." - 1 Peter 3:1,7

"But I want you to understand that the head of every many is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." - 1 Corinthians 11:13

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God since both were created in the image of God. The relationship between a husband and a wife should reflect Christ's relationship with the Church. The marriage relationship is described in scripture as a covenant relationship. Husbands and wives are to be "one" in the Lord. Marriages are to be the place where husbands and wives serve each other by providing love, encouragement, and nurturing that will enrich their lives together and build a Christ centered home. Husbands are to love their wives sacrificially. Husbands are called to lead, guard, and protect their wives. Wives are to love, submit, and respect their husbands. Paul says husbands and wives are to do this "as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22,25). Each one is to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21).

Parents relationship with Children

"Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him." - Psalm 12:3

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” - Ephesians 6:4

“You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” - Deuteronomy 11:19

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” - Proverbs 22:6

Children are a gift from the Lord that Parents have a stewardship over. God teaches husbands and wives much about who he is through raising children. God has designed that Parents (Fathers & Mothers) establish Godly homes where children are to be born, taught to know and serve the Lord, and provide a structure that contributes to the well-being of society. The home is to be a place centered on God’s love and biblical truth.

Other ways Parents care for their Children:

- Modeling a Godly life. 1 Corinthians 11:1, 2 Timothy 1:5, 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- Exercising Godly authority and responsibility over their children in love. 1 Timothy 3:4
- Instructing, equipping, and disciplining their children in the ways of the Lord. This also includes discipline. Proverbs 1:8, Proverbs 13:24
- Praying for them. 1 Timothy 2:1, 3 John 2-4
- Providing for them. 1 Timothy 5:8, 2 Corinthians 12:14

Children

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” - Exodus 20:12

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” - Colossians 3:20

“Hear my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching; Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to you head and ornaments around your neck.” - Proverbs 1:8-9

Children relationship with Parents

Children are called to lovingly submit and obey their Parents in such a way that pleases God. God has ordained that children learn from their parents by observing and emulating their walk with the Lord which accords with sound biblical teaching (Titus 2:1). Children are to pray for their parents to hear from God and walk in his ways (1 Timothy 2:1). They are to honor their Parents as the authority that God has placed over them (Ephesians 6:1).

Sibling relationships

“Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” - Ephesians 5:1-2

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you.” - Ephesians 4:31-32

Brothers and sisters are to walk in love, forgiveness, and compassion with one another. The way siblings love and care for each other is to be an example of how brothers and sisters in Christ are to walk and love each other in the Church and vice versa.

Conclusion

- The Church is the family of God
- Families are given by God and should be built on his love and truth
- Families are to be an example of Godly order and designed by God to be a blessing to the world

“Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church.” *Jonathan Edwards*

“A man ought to live so that everybody knows he is a Christian...and most of all, his family ought to know.” *D.L. Moody*