The Family As a Mediating Factor in Retaining Members

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The Importance of Family

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV)
A Biblical Example of Family Evangelism

And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood...He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.

Genesis 7:7, 23 (ESV)
The Most Important Mission Field

Our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home...There is no missionary field more important than this...

The Work of Parents

*In love, faith and prayer let parents work for their households, until with joy they can come to God saying, ‘Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.*

The Work of the Family

...it is imperative that we understand God’s expectations of how children should be nurtured. The local church is crucial in this process but a child’s family is central.

What we may Know about Family Impact

1. **Role Modeling**: The spiritual and social core values and behaviors of our children are strongly correlated with our own. To a significant extent, our children become us (probability; not determinism). That means:
   a. Our attitudes from religious to gender, race and class; our attitudes and expressions are picked-up by our children.
   b. Our practice must follow the expression of our attitudes. If God is important then we must:
      1. Have family worship
      2. Teach our children to pray early
      3. Attend church regularly
2. Importance of emotional bonding (sometimes called love)

   a. It is this emotional and spiritual bond that makes parental impact more possible.

   b. It involves:
      1. wanting to spend time with
      2. wanting to be that type of person
      3. a trusting bond
      4. seeing that parental spirituality is authentic.
3. Importance of communication and active statements/intervention (but walking the walk):
   a. Importance of positive emotional bond makes communication effective
   b. Children need to understand parents spiritual values and see them lived
   c. If parents approve or don’t approve of something it needs to be stated
   d. Need to be open and always ready to listen.
4. Importance of engagement in the lives of our children

a. This involves shared activity times: learning, sports, games, nature, and church. It is bonding and neuro-development.

b. Knowing/figuring out what is important to our children; know their spiritual struggles and even their hobbies.

c. Community service and its benefits:

1. Better grades
2. Lower rates of pregnancy
3. Lower rates of delinquency/drug
4. More pro-social behavior.
5. Family dinners at least 3-5 times per week
   a. Lower delinquency rates
   b. Lower rates of substance use/abuse
   c. Lower rates of sexual activity
   d. Higher rates of safe activities (seat belts to bicycle helmets)
   e. Lower rates of vulnerability!!!
5. Family dinners continued...

f. Lower rates of obesity

g. Higher grades

h. Lower rates of substance use and delinquency

i. Lower rates of victimization

j. Lower rates of suicidal ideation and attempts.
What is going on at Family Meals?

1. Monitoring. We ask what is going on
2. Emotional/spiritual Bonding. Meals are often associated with positive emotions/interactions
3. Communication. Conversations happen
4. Role Modeling. Our children see who we are and what we do from the implementation of our spiritual to our social attitudes
5. Hypocrisy is unbelievably destructive!!!
Plan To Avoid Distractions During Meals

1. Turn off all electronic media
2. Put the newspaper out of sight
3. No books on the table
4. No cell phones at the table
5. Have a message on your voice mail to receive recorded messages during dinner time. However, do not answer calls during that time.
Family Issues and Membership Attrition

• 40% decided to leave church because of:
  • Divorce
  • Marital conflict
  • Death in the family
  • Illness in the family
  • Birth or adoption
  • Child leaving home.
Family Ministries: Retaining and Reclaiming Members

- 76% are open to reconnecting with Adventist Church.
- Opportunity for Family Ministries in retaining and reclaiming members.
  - Conducting needs analyses of congregation.
  - Providing relevant resources.
Available Resources from Family Ministries

- Annual Planbook
- Family to Family
- Real Family Talk
- Family Worship App

GC Family Ministries: family.adventist.org
Basic Change Model

See

Get

Do
Live By Your Values

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV)
Priority in Ministry

Nothing can excuse the minister for neglecting the inner circle for the larger circle outside. The spiritual welfare of his family comes first.

Ellen G White, Gospel Workers, p. 204.
The Promise of Success

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)
References

References continued...