

LEADERSHIP LESSON # 90: MINISTRY TO FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

OUTLINE BY KAREN PRICKETT

Families are important to God. Throughout God's Word we see example after example of God's desire for godly families. In a world where the divorce rate within the church is as high as it is in our secular society, the preservation of the family is of utmost importance. What is the role of the church in ministry to families?

1. Teach **Responsibility**

First, we need to help parents understand and accept their God-given responsibility of educating their children in **spiritual** matters (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). This can be communicated through the mission statement of the church's children's ministry, written communications, and from the pulpit.

2. **Equip** Parents

Many parents feel ill-equipped to **train** their children in spiritual matters.

George Barna, author of Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions and Revolutionary Parenting, found that millions of parents are unaware of the breadth of spiritual needs their children have. "Of the 51 million children under the age of 18 who live in the United States, more than 40 million of them do not know Jesus Christ as their savior, which suggests that there are some basic unmet spiritual needs that parents are overlooking. This is one of the most significant and fertile mission fields in the nation, yet the very people who claim responsibility for the spiritual growth of those children are doing little about it beyond dropping their kids off at church. Churches could help more by being increasingly proactive in preparing parents to handle that responsibility wisely." ¹

Offer opportunities for parent **education** and **support**.

- a. **Sermons** on Parenting and the Family – God's plan for families involves parents living lives that honor God, reading and studying Scripture and praying during regular family worship times in the home, and ministering to others together.
- b. Short-term Bible **Studies** and **Conferences** – Many Bible studies and conferences are available to help parents learn how to lead their children to Christ, raise godly boys and girls, and even discipline their children in ways that honor God.
- c. Ongoing **Support** – Finding a safe place to share and gain insight and prayer support can be a difficult task when families face struggles. Churches can help strengthen families by forming support groups or pairing struggling families with those who have experienced the same kinds of challenges and are spiritually healthy again.

3. Provide Quality Ministry to **Children**

Finally, ministry to children should be of high priority in the church. When we understand that people are most likely to come to know Jesus as Savior before the teen years (The Barna Group), the importance of children's ministry is clear. Families see that children are valued in our churches when there is a **secure, friendly** environment where children of all ages can learn about God's great love for them. The Sunday School class is just the beginning!

¹ The Barna Group, *Parents Accept Responsibility for Their Child's Spiritual Development But Struggle With Effectiveness*, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/120-parents-accept-responsibility-for-their-childs-spiritual-development-but-struggle-with-effectiveness>, The Barna Group, Ltd, 2009.

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Offer opportunities for parent _____ and _____.

- a. _____ on Parenting and the Family – God's plan for families involves parents living lives that honor God, reading and studying Scripture and praying during regular family worship times in the home, and ministering to others together.
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