

The Importance of Family Time

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The family is under attack from the devil and from the world. The devil knows that the heartbeat of the Church is the covenant family. The devil knows that if he can abolish the family unit from off the earth, he has also rid the world of the Church. He is working hard at it. His attacks on the family unit within the church are real and vicious, and that is why an article such as this, stressing *The Importance of Family Time*, is necessary and good. So, young people, take some time to read what I, as a fellow young person, have to say about *The Importance of Family Time*.

What is family time? This question must first be answered. A general definition is, quite simply, time spent together as a family. But, let's be more specific in our definition. More particularly, family time is time spent together, as a family, doing things which are constructive, and doing things which are conducive to spiritual unity in the family. It is not just the being together as a family and doing things together that is important, but also what we do when we are together is important. Family time is not time spent together as a family sitting around the television, and family time is not just being in the house and sitting in your bedroom reading a book. It is important what we do together as a family. Therefore, the most important aspect of family time is time which is spent reading, studying, discussing and singing from God's Word. There must be a spiritual bond in a family, or all the time spent together as a family is wasted. In order that this spiritual bond may be real, each member of the family must realize his or her God-given place and calling in the family, and each must willingly fulfill that calling.

Young People, we all also have a place and a calling in the covenant home and family, and we must fulfill it willingly. The place of parents, husbands and wives, and the place of young children in the home are clear to us. We often hear from the pulpit and are taught clearly from the Scriptures what place these family members have in the family, but, where do we fit in, and what is our place and calling as young people?

As unmarried young people, we still have an important role to fulfill in the family unit. This is indisputably clear from the examples and lessons of Scripture. Isaac was an active member of Abraham's family until he was married at 40 years of age. Rachel and Leah were under their father's roof and chaperoned until the day they were married. David and his brothers all played active roles in Jesse's family and fulfilled their duties and callings in the running of their father's affairs. Our Saviour is also often referred to as "Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter, Joseph's son." This can only mean that he also was an active member of that family. So, we can see from the examples of Scripture that we remain under our parents' supervision as young people, and they are responsible to God for us. This means we don't leave home when we are 18 or 19 because we are supposedly "grown up." This means that our parents know who our friends are, and where we go, and what we do with them. This means our parents know who our date is, and where we went, and it also means that we are home before our curfew. We are called to obey our parents. There is also a word here for parents. Parents must know what their children are doing. God holds parents responsible for this. I dare say, that if some parents would just tighten the reins on their adolescent children, they would relieve themselves of much heartache later on, and the children would also learn to appreciate this as they grow and mature in their faith.

Family time, as I have said, is time spent together as a family in a spiritual bond. This implies unity. As each family member realizes and fulfills his God-given place in the family, this

bond and unity becomes real and evident. Home and the family provide a haven of rest and fun. Family members love to be at home. Husbands look forward all day to being home with their wife and family. Wives gladly fulfill their duties in the home during the day, so that in the evening and at night they can spend time with the family. Children are eager to be home from school to share their experiences of the day. Young people are not always wanting to go out with their peers, but are happy to be at home with the family, and their peers are also happy to visit with them at home. Also, when the family is together and they read God's Word and sing His praises, the truths of the Scriptures are taught to the children, and the children receive real impressions of, and real interests in the things of God. All the family together in this way creates a strong spiritual family bond which always keeps the family close. Memories that last a lifetime, and which are often the fondest memories of the aged, are created right here in your youth in the family.

The time spent together as a family must be and is an integral part of the covenant home. The family should not just gather together like this on special occasions, such as birthdays or other celebrations, but, covenant parents must insist on all members of the family taking part in the life of the family on a day to day basis. Only then is the real unity and bonding of covenant family life realized. When we read Psalms 127 and 128 we realize the blessedness of the God-fearing man and his family.

There are also many evils which haunt and plague the Christian family. These are evident in the world. The world does not want the family unit. The world wants equality between marriage partners. The world mocks God's holy institution of marriage and the family with its divorce and its defacto relationships. The world mocks God's creation of man and woman in its sodomy and homosexual marriages. But, all these evils seem distant from and abstract to the church, or at least our churches. But, are they? I believe they are not. We are all, of ourselves, also inclined to all evil. So, we must be aware that sin starts with the little things in our hearts, and grows and creeps into our lives.

Therefore, we as young people must realize our present calling in the home and family, but we must also realize what our place and calling will be in our own families in a few years time, if the Lord wills that we marry. Career minded and independent minded young women are not realizing God's calling for them in the family unit. Young men who waste their time and money on cars, alcohol and parties, are not realizing God's calling for them in the home and family. It starts right here with these things in our youth.

We are the up and coming generations of the Church. Will we be taking the Church along with the world, or are we willing to walk in the old paths and follow God and His Word?

The importance of family time does not only concern our own salvation, but the salvation of the whole church and its future generations. May God grant that we willingly fulfill our God-given place in the home, and may He help us, each one, to realize the importance of the family and family time.

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