

Sharing the Burden

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Every reader of these words has a part in the training of covenant children. You do not need to be married. You do not need to have children of your own. You don't need to be a teacher. You are a member of the body of Christ, and the body of Christ works together to rear the next generation in the fear of the Lord. Some have a greater part in the training of covenant children than others, but we all have some part.

The parents who bring forth children of the covenant must be at the heart of raising their children. Godly parents are present at all times to care for the needs of the child. They hold them, comfort them, and keep them from danger. Above all, they work toward bringing that child to a full and living understanding of God and the salvation by which He gathers His people into covenant friendship with Himself. Godly parents bathe their children in God's Word. The children hear it read at every meal and are taught to block out the thoughts and busy activity of daily life in order to enter into fellowship with God in prayer. Parents must teach their children what God has said to His people in His Word, demonstrate a walk of faith and righteousness, and manifest the love of God.

If children are left to wander in a home where God is remote, cold, and abstract, then the child will shiver and be spiritually cold. If children are left to find food for their soul on their own, they will grow gaunt and scavenge for food in the gutters of society. The cravings of their sinful nature will draw them to the rotting carcasses of spiritually dead men who gorge on material wealth, power, and self-glory. They will soon despise the scraps of sound spiritual food which are tossed now and then from their parents. Parents must keep the table of God's fellowship piled high with hot nourishing food.

Parents are at the heart of child rearing, but just as the physical heart in a body needs the rest of the body to function; parents need the rest of the body of Christ, not an ungodly neighbor or daycare center. Do not place your children in the red hot arms of Molech to be consumed by ungodly instruction and examples (Lev. 20:1-4). Children need the parents first of all, and when help is needed, it must come from other members of the body of Christ. Those of us who are not parents taking care of young children must offer our help and be willing to help.

The church itself is called to bring the Word of God in the preaching and catechism. The elders and deacons also are given to the church to help parents, answering questions and bringing God's word. Parents who are unable to make ends meet financially, must not abandon the children sending the mother out to work. Parents must come to the deacons for help and they will receive spiritual blessings upon the family and children that are lost when the mother works. Children and the needs of their parents must never be overlooked by the church institute.

Other family members are also called to help the parents. Grandma and Grandpa ought to relieve the parents of their work now and then if possible. Older brothers and sisters must be willing to help with the work and be godly examples to the younger. They must be willing to talk about their struggles and weaknesses with the family. They must demonstrate a hunger and thirst for God's Word by preparing well for catechism and young peoples society. They must show the younger members what it means to flee temptation and suffer ridicule for Christ's sake.

Young people, and especially those who have made confession of faith, you have a calling to act as a brother or sister to the younger members of the church. View yourself as a role model for the younger instead of one who needs to prove yourself to your peers. You will not find true respect in "daring" explorations of sin. Lasting and true respect from your peers will come by standing firm in obedience to God's Word. Your godly leadership will also be a powerful influence upon the little ones of the congregation.

Godly teachers functioning as the extension of the home devote their lives to the children of the covenant. They turn down the higher salaries offered in public schools in order to press their gifts into

the service of covenant parents. They recognize the importance of children in the church. The concept of God saving His people in the line of continued generations is in the foreground of their minds. They pray that they may see the blessing of God upon their labors as they watch spiritually mature young men and women take up the work of God's kingdom in the church. God gives to the children many gifts of understanding and talents which the teacher desires to bring to fullest development that they might be profitable servants of God.

As with parents, the teachers need full support from the whole church. The importance of a teacher's position must be emphasized. The world knows the value of education and seeks to attract good teachers with good wages. The world sends its teachers through rigorous training to equip them with the best tools available for teaching children. They labor hard to educate the children of a perishing world; how much more then ought we to labor to rear children of the covenant!

The people of the church must encourage young people to consider the calling of teacher. They must encourage young men to consider teaching as a profession and life long career. They must be willing to equip teachers with the best teaching tools available and provide for their needs as they begin their work with the children. When the children are in school, everyone in the church ought to take an interest in what goes on in the school. Single adults may consider visiting the school to see if there is any way to help. If that is not possible, just call a teacher or administrator to offer your help. Above all, those who rear covenant youth must be remembered in prayer. Everyone ought to pray for the parents and teachers that they may have wisdom to train up the children in the fear of the Lord. ❖

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