

Family Life and the Church

This session in our series of church equipping, "Joined and Knit Together," will focus on ***"Family Life Inside and Outside the Church."*** We will examine various ways the church and the family function and intersect and how they are either a blessing or a hindrance to one another.

Let's begin by reading what is the flagship text in the Bible on family life: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

"Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'^[a]

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!^[b] ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Family Life Inside and Outside the Church

- I. Three propositions
- II. The complementary roles of church and family explained
- III. Families need church life
- IV. Family worship
- V. Marriage
- VI. Fatherhood
- VII. Motherhood
- VIII. Family Discipleship
- IX. Family affections

I. Three propositions:

First, Churches are strong when families are strong. Churches are holy as families are holy.

Second, families are strong when churches are strong. Families are holy as churches are holy.

Third, the fountainhead of holiness in church and family life is God: "You shall be holy for I am holy."

II. The complementary roles of church and family explained

Our fervent prayer is that God will raise up churches in which the Scriptures are honored, proclaimed, and obeyed as the only rule for both doctrine and practice; resulting in the strengthening of churches and families through the rejection of all unbiblical doctrines and practices.

As a result, the church and the family will be equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ in a biblically faithful way and to build God's house in accordance with His pleasure.

We seek to identify specific biblical requirements for both the church and the family, to recognize various modern departures from the Word of God concerning the church and the family, and to present scriptural teaching that addresses some of the problems in church and family relations.

THE CHURCH IS ETERNAL WHILE THE FAMILY IS TEMPORAL

We affirm that the church is the bride of Christ and the family of God, and that in heaven people 'neither marry nor are given in marriage,' indicating that the family, which is part of the creation order, established for the fulfillment of the dominion mandate here on earth, ceases to exist in heaven, but that on earth and in Christ, the family becomes a vehicle for the demonstration of the relationship between Christ and His Church and for raising children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Gen. 1:26-28; 18:19; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 22:29-32; Eph. 5:22-33; 6:1-4).

FAMILIES MAY BE DIVIDED BY THE GOSPEL

We affirm that the gospel may divide families, because the gospel can "set a man at variance against his father," that "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," and that we ought to obey God rather than man if there be any conflict between the commands of a husband or parent and the commands of God (Matt. 10:35-37; Acts 4:19-21; 5:21).

We deny/reject that loyalty to the family should ever supersede obedience to God as set forth in His Word, and making the family into an idol.

THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY ARE COMPLEMENTARY IN ROLE AND FUNCTION

We affirm that the church and the family were designed to be complementary, compatible, and harmonious because the family is commanded to raise “godly seed,” for the next generation, and is the proving ground for church leaders, while the church is responsible to give the family her instruction, discipline, protection, fellowship, and worship (Mal. 2:15; Acts 2:42; Eph. 6:1-4; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9).

We deny/reject that the church and the family have competing purposes; and that the church or family may disregard God’s commands for the church and the family in worship, instruction, discipline, fellowship, or missions.

ELDERS MANAGING THEIR HOUSEHOLDS WELL

We affirm that a biblically ordered home, including the way an elder loves his wife and raises his children, is of great importance to the church because elders are qualified and tested partly by how they manage their households as well as how the household responds to his rule. “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God” (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Titus 1:5-9).

We deny/reject that the biblical qualifications for the home life of an elder or potential elder should be dismissed or minimized or that churches can ignore the equipping of fathers to lead their own houses according to the Word of God, bringing up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” and having their “children in subjection with all gravity” (Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Tim. 3:4).

THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY PROVIDE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS

We affirm that the local church and the family are separate, yet provide overlapping jurisdictions so that each member of the family who is a member of a local church is under the instruction and correction of that local body, where delegated divine authority is exercised for the equipping, maturation, admonition, and strengthening of the family and for the restraint of evil, while at the same time the local church must acknowledge and uphold the jurisdiction of the family (Matt. 16:18; 18:15-17; 28:19; 1 Cor. 4:15; 5:11-13; 7:3-5; Eph. 4:12; 5:22-33; 6:1-4; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:1, 14-15; 5:17; Titus 1:7, 9; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:3).

We deny/reject as unscriptural the concept of the autonomous family in total isolation from or insubordinate to the church, as well as the tyrannical church that tramples on or belittles the legitimate exercise of authority within the family.

III. Families need church life.

THE CHURCH IS ESSENTIAL FOR BIBLICAL FAMILY LIFE

We affirm that biblical involvement in local churches including her worship services, meetings, preaching, ordinances, relationships, evangelism, prayers and instruction, is required for the equipping of individuals and families to fulfill their God ordained mission

(Rom. 12:10, 13; 15:5; 1 Cor. 11:33; 12:25; Eph. 4:11-12; 5:19; 1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11; Heb. 10:24-25; James 5:16; 1 Peter 4:10).

We deny/reject that the family can replace the church, that the local church should play a minor role in the life of a family, or that the family should neglect the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Church life is Broadening – different kinds of people

Church life is Challenging – different places doctrinally

Church life is Sanctifying – opportunities to offend one another

Church life stimulates Growth in patience – calls for longevity of relationships.

How important it is for families to fit their lives into church life not the other way around

Families need to follow the direction of the church in her discipleship agendas. God gives elders to churches to prescribe a discipleship regimen to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

Families are strengthened when churches are strong.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE WORD OF GOD IS BY THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY

We affirm that the saints of God of all ages are to be equipped for spiritual ministry and maturity by the church through the preaching of the Word of God by qualified elders, that the body builds itself up in love through its members, and that in the Christian family, all fathers and mothers have the responsibility to teach the gospel and the truths of the faith to their children, that they may be saved and brought up in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Deut. 6:4-7; Eph. 4:11-12, 16; 6:4; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 2 Tim. 4:2).

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY IS GENERATIONAL

We affirm that God commands churches, families, and individuals to teach the gospel and make disciples in every generation, “that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son” (Ex. 12:26-27; 13:14; Deut. 4:9; 6:1-9; Pss. 78:1-8; 127; 135:13; 145:4-7; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 1:50; 24:45-47; Acts 16:10; Rom. 10:14-15; Eph. 6:4).

CHURCH MINISTRY FACILITATES FAMILY MINISTRY

We affirm that God’s people must be nurtured through the example and instruction of their church’s elders and members in everyday life, and of the importance of fathers and mothers training their families to fulfill the Great Commission through ministry to the saints and witness to the lost (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:46-47; 8:4; 18:24-26; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Titus 2:2-6; Heb. 3:13).

IV. Family worship:

Impact of family worship on church worship

V. Marriage:

Impact of Marriage on church life

VI. Fatherhood:

Impact of Fatherhood on church life

VII. Motherhood:

Impact of Motherhood on church life

VIII. Family Discipleship:

Biblical discipline for children: honor and obedience, the use of the rod

Child discipline and church effectiveness

Your effectiveness and consistency in child discipline will have a profound impact on the church.

Impact of family holiness to church holiness

Teaching Children to listen

IX. Family affections:

Affection for the local church

We resolve

Preserve the true gospel from one generation to the next, through biblically-ordered, gospel-preaching, Christ-exalting churches and families.

Rely upon the Scriptures alone for “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3), obeying the Bible as fully sufficient for the ordering of the church and the family and resisting Satan’s deception designed to supplant God’s goals and methods with the world’s methods.

Focus churches and families on the Word of God by restoring the practice of teaching the whole counsel of God through exegetical preaching of Scripture in the church by biblically qualified elders and daily instruction in homes by fathers and mothers.

Establish the central importance of the local church for the equipping of individuals and families.

Revive the biblically defined role and functionality of the family where fathers diligently teach their children when they “sittest in thine house,” when they “walkest by the way,” when they “liest down” and when they “risest up,” and where biblical manhood and womanhood is restored (Deut. 6:7; Tit. 2:1-8).

Recover the relationally rich nature of the local church as the family of God by following the biblical patterns for worship, discipleship, and hospitality.

Join hands with those who desire to perpetuate faithfulness to the Word of God in matters of church and family life.

In summary:

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