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Issue 12

GOD'S WAY FOR THE FAMILY

Ian McPherson

We of the "older generation" can all remember when divorce was almost unheard of. Families consisted of a married Mum and Dad raising their own children together in their homes. It was usual for Dad to do secular work and support the family, while Mum stayed home, doing the housekeeping. Society today, is trying to tell us that this concept is "old hat" and are forcing our children to accept a variety of corrupted models for the family.

The fact is, God is the creator of the home. He knows what is best for us. Since we are His creation, we must respect His laws. In the Garden of Eden He made man (male and female) in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). He made Adam first, and recognising his need for a companion, made Eve to be his wife. He then commanded the husband and wife to go forth and multiply. The world has no solutions to family problems, but God certainly does have. Let us look at "God's way for the family".

GOD'S WAY FOR THE HUSBAND AND FATHER. The man is the head of his wife (Ephesians 5:23), and is charged with "ruling his house well, having his children in subjection" (1 Timothy 3:4). He is the primary bread winner (Genesis 3:18-19, 1 Timothy 5:8), and is also responsible for rearing his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). The word "husband" comes from an old English word "husbonda" which means "Master of the house". He makes the final and important decisions of the house, and keeps it secure and orderly. He

must spend time with his wife and children, and make them the centre of his life (1 Corinthians 7:33). A great lie that is propagated today is that headship implies "domination". Quite the opposite is true. A godly husband must "love and cherish" his wife as Christ does the church (Ephesians 5:28-29). He is to be kind, considerate, affectionate, romantic and gentle. Notice this beautiful passage in 1 Peter 3:7 *"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."* If all men treated their wives with this type of affection, there would be no "Women's Liberation Movement".

GOD'S WAY FOR THE WIFE AND MOTHER. A great proverb says *"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD."* (Proverbs 18:22). Being a good wife and Mother is the most valuable service that any woman can render to her family and to society; her price is "far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10). The World English Dictionary defines the word "housewife" as "a woman, typically a married woman, who keeps house, usually without having paid employment". Married women should stay at home as homemakers, caring for her husband and children (1 Timothy 5:14). Child minding centres cannot, and must not, take her place. If stability is to be restored in society, our girls need to be trained and educated to make their homes the centre of their lives. One Scripture that summarises her position in the home is Titus 2:4-5 ... *"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."* If women of today made this their objective, what a remarkable change for good there would be in society.

GOD'S WAY FOR CHILDREN. Children are to respect their parents and obey them in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-2). Children who are disrespectful and rebellious bring very grave reproach upon their parents and society. Rebellion however is generally because parents have not given their children the right type of discipline and instruction when they were young. The proverb writer said: *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* (Prov 22:6). He also said. *"Correct thy son, and he*

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Mersey Bluff church of Christ
232 William Street
Devonport, TAS 7310
Email:
merseyforth@yahoo.com
ianandmabel@iinet.net.au

Download additional copies at:
www.merseybluffcofc.com.au

shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." (Proverbs 29:17)

Families that function God's way are blessed indeed. Let us end by quoting from the Psalms. *"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. 2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. 3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. 4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord".* Psalms 128:1-4

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR PREACHER

Brett Rutherford

Some congregations might have unreasonably high expectations for the man that fills their pulpit each Sunday. They may expect their evangelist to have nearly superhuman capabilities.

On the other hand, there are many congregations who do not expect enough from their evangelist (or evangelists). Those who choose to take on the role of an evangelist must recognize that it is a life that demands sacrifice and service. An evangelist is a servant of God, and His people. Churches have the right to expect their preacher to work hard in the service of his fellow Christians. What can a congregation expect from the man who takes on the role of an evangelist?

Sound in the faith. Congregations should expect the man who fills their pulpit each Sunday to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Too many congregations tolerate the presentation of false doctrine because they do not have the courage to challenge the preacher. Others put up with bad preaching because they are relieved that the church has someone who is at least willing to do the job. This latter view can be often found in congregations that cannot afford to hire a full-time evangelist, and the preaching is done by any member who is willing to give it a go. Churches must be careful not to allow willingness rather than faithfulness to become the primary qualification for their preacher.

Availability. Congregations have the right to demand that their preacher make himself available to help any member who is struggling with their spiritual well-being. There should be no time in the day or night that a preacher refuses to help someone who is having difficulty with their Christian walk. I heard one old preacher say, "Being a preacher is a twenty-five hour, eight day a week job."

Evangelists must also be expected to help out with the physical needs of members of their congregation. A preacher should never feel that he is above whatever physical needs that might arise among the membership. He must remember that he is a servant. Keep in mind that at least two of the men who saw to the needs of the Grecian widows in Acts chapter six were also evangelists.

Naturally, a preacher must also be careful not to spend too much time away from his congregation. Far too many preachers agree to work with one congregation, and then spend all of their time travelling to, and working with, other churches. Preachers need to limit the time they are away from their home congregation. A church is less likely to prosper if their full-time worker is rarely at home. However, congregations should not begrudge a preacher who travels to another congregation to preach in a gospel meeting from time to time. The local evangelist should also not be condemned for preaching on the occasional lectureship.

Staying Power. The Lord's church desperately needs evangelists who have staying power. In my experience a congregation does not begin to fully reap the benefits of having a full-time evangelist until the preacher has worked with that congregation for at least three years.

Preachers and congregations need to be patient with one another. Congregations can quickly become bored with their evangelist and ask him to move on before he has had an opportunity to really have an impact on the community. On the other hand, preachers can sometimes get itchy feet, and begin looking for another position while a congregation is still in desperate need of their services.

The Promotion of the Gospel. Finally, a congregation has the right to expect their local evangelist to work hard in the promotion of the gospel in their community. The reason that the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses are among the fastest growing religious bodies in the world is because they are found in the community nearly every day promoting their doctrines. Preachers need to keep in mind that the lost are rarely converted by a sermon from the pulpit on Sunday. The church in the first century grew because it went to the masses instead of the expecting the masses to come to them (Acts 5:42; 20:20, 21).

