FAMILY TIME

Everything God intends for our physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing should be found within our family.

KEY POINTS

1. The Statistics Canada census defines family as: "a…couple and the children, if any, of either and/or both partners; or a lone parent of any marital status with at least one child living in the same dwelling."
2. Desmond Tutu (prominent South African cleric) said, "You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."
3. And from Barbara Ehrenreich, an American feminist and political activist: "At best the family teaches the finest things human beings can learn from one another – generosity and love. But it is also, all too often, where we learn nasty things like hate, rage and shame."
4. There are many views on what family *is* and what family *means*.
5. Genesis 2 provides the first glimpse of the concept of 'family' in scripture: the LORD looks at Adam, observes that it is not good for him to be alone.
6. In response to Adam's need, God creates a woman to be his companion and helper.
7. Adam pronounces, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23 NASB).
8. So our first basic understanding of family is that we are joined together by blood – bone of bone, flesh of flesh. Certainly, this is how children come into a family, and they grow up understanding that they come out of and are given life by their parents.
9. The next verse expands our understanding of the life-long covenant of marriage:
   "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24 NASB).
10. However, Pope John Paul II's words resonate in our current society: "The great danger for family life in the midst of any society whose idols are pleasure, comfort and independence, lies in the fact that people close their hearts and become selfish."
11. In other words, some people come to believe that family is 'all about ME', my way, what I want. And if I don't get my way, I'm gone!
12. It is so crucial for parents to truly "parent" their children, rather than to inappropriately pamper them and facilitate bad behaviours.
13. The important lessons of submission, obedience, fairness and selflessness are meant to be learned in the context of a 'family' where love reigns; where we are treasured by those who are closest to us.

KEY SCRIPTURES:
Genesis 2:18-25; Romans 12:9-10;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Colossians 3:12-24

- "Home" is where we should learn about compassion, unconditional love, truth and honesty, unselfishness, helpfulness, the value of time and attention;
- About sharing dreams without ridicule, celebrating triumphs without jealousy, enduring defeats without shame;
- About the blessings of boundaries, joys of companionship and intimacy of love.
- "Home" is where we learn, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God… is One!" (Deuteronomy 6:4); where we learn of the saving power of the name, Jesus; where we pray for the daily infilling of the Holy Spirit to fulfill His mission in our world.
- This is where we pray for each other. Where we study and discuss the Word of God so we can be formed in His image.
- A personal relationship with God is crucial, but He is looking for more than that.
- He has blessed us with spouses, children, siblings, relatives and friends, and He wants us to help them draw closer to Him.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Review some of the items in the lesson above that we need to demonstrate as spouses, parents, and children. Which are easiest/hardest to learn/teach/practice?
2. Read Colossians 3:12-24 and Ephesians 5:22-6:4.
   What do they teach regarding family life? What are some possible ways families can put these principles into practice?
3. Agree or disagree: Life lessons (positive and negative) are more effectively "caught" than taught. What are your reasons for answering as you did?
4. As summer wanes and things get back to 'normal', what can your family embed into your daily routines to build relationships with one another and with God?

Prayer Time
Lord, please help our family to reflect Your love and Your ideal family. In Jesus' name, amen.

Start-up: What do you routinely find yourself doing at the end of August? Are they back-to-school, or "official end of summer"-related, or neither?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 2018

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS