

# Equipping The Saints

“...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service...” ~ Ephesians 4:12

November 1, 2015

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## Growing A Spiritual Family

(By Daniel S. Dow)

A faithful and godly family does not just happen. Yet, a family does not go through a daily ‘ritual’ or ‘ceremony’ to become more spiritual. Godliness and spirituality comes through careful planning and determined cultivation. It becomes a way of life.

**A spiritual family begins with godly parents** who, before the birth of their first born, are determined to **“nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord”** (Eph. 6:4). This couple begins their marriage with the primary thought that God will always abide in their home. They acknowledge the Truth: **“Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it”** (Psalm 127:1). If you want a spiritual family, you must first allow God to be a part of your family by allowing Him to lead and direct. We must relinquish our will to His.

**A spiritual family spends time together.** Godly families eat, play, study, and worship together. The wise and experienced Solomon warns the parent, **“A child left himself causeth shame to his mother”** (Prov. 29:15). Children desperately need the parent’s time and attention. Through inspiration he also pointed out the benefits of family companionship in Ecclesiastes four. **“There is one that is alone, and he hath not a second; yea, he hath neither son nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labor, neither are his eyes satisfied with riches. For whom then, saith he, do I labor, and deprive my soul of good? This also is vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two**

**lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one be warm alone? And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken”** (Eccl. 4:8-12). Godly families will enjoy and appreciate one another’s company.

**A spiritual family eats together.** This time is used for conversation concerning events of the day, and it will most likely involve Bible discussions. We find out what our children did during the day, and what mother and father did during their day. Plans for future events might be discussed. Family talk should be cherished by all—your children will remember these days. This is obviously a time to pray together and be thankful to God for the families’ dependence upon God and prosperity (John 6:11). This time can be used to read the Scriptures if a family so determines it to be prudent. Remember the words of Moses as he instructed the family heads of Israel, **“Love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates”** (Deut. 6:4-9).

**A spiritual family plays together.** This is manifested in a simple ‘game night’ or maybe a trip to the zoo. God reminds us life is to be enjoyed. **“Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy life...”** (Eccl. 9:9). **“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity”** (Eccl. 11:9-10). A godly family will benefit from laughing and have fun with one another. The wise king said, **“A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance...”** (Prov. 15:13). Of course, all the ‘fun’ must be considered in light of God’s Word. Is it right? Would it cause me or

others to sin? How will it affect our influence? Etc.

**A spiritual family works together.** The family that cooks a meal together, cleans the house together, or does yard work together derive great benefits. The responsibility of chores, the accomplishment of a job well done and the loving instructions from a parent can go a long, long way to making our families what they ought to be spiritually (Eccl. 9:10; 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Eph. 4:28). The Lord teaches us, **“Even a child maketh himself known by his doings, Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right”** (Prov. 20:11). This work might involve helping others, therefore teaching a valuable lesson of selflessness. **“Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others”** (Phil. 2:4).

**A spiritual family worships together.** Whether at home or at the church building the family is together. They attend services together thus provoking **“love and good works”** (Heb. 10:24-25). (1) Worship services and Bible studies take priority over all things: work, school, sports, vacations, etc. (2) We must also take the time to prepare for study and worship. This means we will equip our children with their Bible and lesson and book. We will prepare them for their Bible classes by reading and helping the prepare lessons or memorize texts. (3) This obviously requires parental awareness and involvement. Attend area Gospel Meetings together as a family. Not only do you learn God’s Word, but conversation is provoked, new friendships can be established in other congregations, and brethren are encouraged by your family’s visit. Study the Bible together at home. We cannot expect two 30-minute classes at the church building to fully equip our children for life. It is the parent’s responsibility to teach their children God’s Word. We must take the time to read together, study together and pray together.

**Pray diligently for your family.** Pray that it be faithful, godly and spiritual. Then, execute God’s plan for the family in your life and it will come to pass. **“For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice...”** (Gen. 18:19).

## On A Personal Note...

The article in this bulletin hits particularly close to home this week. In the early minutes of Tuesday morning my wife and I were blessed with the birth of Josiah Raymond Dow. I am overjoyed by this new addition to our family, but I am also sobered by the great responsibility that has been entrusted to me. My wife and I are thankful for the prayers that have been offered on our behalf, and we continue to request your prayers as we strive to raise our family to be God-centered.

If you are currently raising a family, I hope that this article encourages you to deliberately raise your families to be spiritually minded. For those of you who may not be currently raising a family, I hope that this article motivates you to encourage the families around you. Let's encourage one another as we work to raise a new generation of God's servants.

My prayer for your families and mine is that our children grow to be like the young king Josiah, of whom it is said, **"while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David"** (2 Chron. 34:1-7).

~ Andrew B. Dow

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#### AM Lesson:

*Comprehending Christ's Church:  
What Is The Local Church?*

#### PM Lesson:

*"Go therefore and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:19-20)*