

Parent Ministry

Practical Family Ministry

A Collection of Ideas for Your Church

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REVIEW: *Practical Family Ministry* is more than just a book by two experts in the field of family ministry, but rather a collection of contributors from all over sharing their best family ministry ideas, advice and hints. It is a must-have on the shelf of youth pastors, family pastors, or any pastor on staff that takes seriously the need for the partnership between the home and the local church.

SNAPSHOT

The Family as Church

Family, a Context for Worship

Family worship is certainly a component of what is commanded in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. A family worshipping together empowers parents to be able tell the story of God's redemption. In order to be successful as a church in equipping families to worship together, a church's leadership must put a priority on families worshipping together, plan well for it, and take practical steps to make it a success.

Family, a Context for Evangelism

Like worship, evangelism finds a place of deeper substance and understanding, when it is taught through the context of the home as well as the church. A child's decision for faith may come at home or at church, but what a blessing it is for children in a Christian home to have parents that are willing to put aside uncertainty and fear in order to personally share saving faith.

Family, a Context for Discipleship

When it comes to discipleship, there is a church-home reversal that needs to happen in a church that is truly engaged in family ministry. The Bible teaches that parents are given the privilege and responsibility for discipleship. The family being the context of discipleship experiences a shift in "F.O.C.U.S": 1.) First seek Him 2.) Opportunities come knocking, be ready 3.) Color outside the lines. 4.) Understand that your children do not always understand the things of God.



5.) Simple teaching and activities are important.

Family Meals, a Place of Spiritual Nourishment

Meal times in a home can be an important spiritual tool for a family. Biblically there is a foundation and priority on family meals as times of discipleship, fellowship, services, evangelism and prayer. Mealtimes are more than times to physically consume food but also times to feed the spiritual needs of a family.

Family on Mission

The mission field is not always a far-away place; the first mission field is in the home as parents share the gospel with their own children. God designed the family as a primary means for sharing the gospel and growing His kingdom. As a family grows together in shared faith, then they can begin to look locally, nationally and globally to serve their world. The church can engage these families on mission together through things like prayer challenges, local outreach, communicating needs, and ongoing engagement. Another way for the church to cultivate family-minded mission is to help them to develop a “missionary vision” for their own family.

The Church as Family

Be a Family by Equipping Parents

While traditionally the model of church has been to have staff-led ministries or focus, in a growing number of family-ministry minded churches the shift has been to equip and empower others, including parents. The “M.A.S.T.E.R.” plan for equipping parents is: 1.) Model what is expected. 2.) Articulate what is expected. 3.) Schedule checkpoints. 4.) Train every teacher to be a parent equipper. 5.) Empathize with struggling parents 6.) Recruit families to share testimonies

Be a Family for Emerging Adults

The church has continued to struggle with engaging and ministering to emerging adults. One of the ways that family-ministry churches has been able to engage emerging adults is to become a family for them by establishing community for them, connecting them to the other generations, and giving them responsibilities in the church.

Be a Family for Blended Families

The church is called to serve every family regardless of their origin and to care for those in need. The church is to be a community of both holiness and of diversity. The best way to be a family to blended families is by being a support to them, integrating them into the life of the church and preparing the church to better minister to their specific needs.

Be a Family by Giving Grandparents a Vision for the Generation

There is a power in faithful, Godly grandparents. The church needs to embrace and value grandparents. The church can maximize their investment in grandparents through: 1.) Partnering with them in discipleship. 2.) Providing them opportunity to encourage and share. 3.) Organizing and affirming them in bringing their grandchildren to church.

Be a Family for Senior Adults

Senior adults in the church are an untapped supply of wisdom and service. Through being surrogate grandparents, mentors, and volunteers, the church can partner with the older generation in ways that both they and the younger generation will find a blessing.

Developing a D6 Vision

Developing a D6 Vision for Our Families

The family remains a means in God's plan to nurture and train the next generation spiritually, building His kingdom. In a Biblical worldview, training of children is primarily a parent's responsibility both in informal and formal ways, guiding children to following Christ for themselves. Children are far more than just our child; they are also a potential brother or sister in Christ as well.

Developing a D6 Vision for Our Ministries

Deuteronomy 6 lays out the plan to pass on truth and Godly living to the next generation through the family by repeating, talking, binding and writing God's word and truth.

Repeat is the first directive. Parents do this by impressing the words of God on the lives of their children through worship, instruction, encouragement and transformation. Talk, as the second instruction, is lived out in God-conversations that families can have as they go through their day together. Finally, binding and writing are a parent's tool to finding intentional forms that send along truth with their children as they go out into the world.

"Spiritual formation is not the sole responsibility of parents or the church. It is a team effort, that requires intentionality on both..." (p. 131). Churches need to seek practical ways to team back up with parents in the spiritual formation of the next generation.