MI Family and Youth

Article on Church + Home

Parents have a significant impact on who their children turn out to be. When it comes to spiritual matters, parents have a greater influence on their children than the church. This is a very important idea because researchers contend that by the age of thirteen, the moral, spiritual and relational foundations of youth are established. Mark Holmen, in his book *Church + Home,* points out that parents are given responsibility to pass on the faith to their children from the Bible. In Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 we find the following: “Hear , O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord the God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down,and when thou risest up”.

However, Mark Holmen found that today’s families are not putting into practice what they have learned about their faith, as they go about their daily lives at home. He sees this trend affecting the involvement of young adults in their religion. 60 to 90 percent of them will no longer be participating in their faith, even though they may have spent a good part of their childhood in church programs. According to a survey, 18-29 year olds believe that Christianity is “hypocritical” because what they see at church is not their experience at home. That is, there is no prayer, reading of the Bible or discussions about Christian living with their parents.

Holmen emphasizes that parents are the role models for the youth and they learn from their parents how to live a religious life. Being a Christian means to live in a close, loving relationship with God all day, every day. Therefore, he believes that the churches need to be focusing their resources on supporting the home as the main place where faith is developed. Many parents may not have grown up in a home where faith was lived, so they do not know how to bring these practices to their children.

This is where churches come in. Holmen started a Faith@Home integrated approach for churches where they support the efforts of parents and their transformation. The purpose of the movement is to bring Christian living back to the home. Holmen works with churches to weave this approach through all programs.

Christians are not the only ones who are supporting the efforts of families to live their faith in the home. Buddhist parents, as an example, teach the basic tenets of their religion to their children at home. The parents are encouraged to do daily devotional chanting with their children before bedtime. They also practice a short meditation with their children. At some temples, there may be a community project in which all families participate on a regular basis.

When my son was growing up, I tried to live the teachings in everything that I did at home. We prayed before eating meals and did daily prayers before bedtime, in front of the altar in his bedroom. I read him a bible story every night until we had gone through the stories several times and he was familiar with them. We discussed the ascended masters and how to call for their help in our daily lives. I showed him beautiful pictures of art and discussed the lives of the famous artists. We went to nature frequently and gave fiats out loud to God and the elementals. When he was older, and was decreeing with the child’s decree book, I taught him how to assist in teaching Sunday school lessons at the local teaching center, and how to lead decrees at the children’s St. Germain service. I continued to read him bedtime stories of the saints and of heroes in history. This made for lively discussions. He loved listening to the stories of the incarnations of Lanello. I realize now that what I did made an influence on his life and helped to build a strong foundation in him of loving kindness to all life.

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