

Introduction:

1. Where have all the godly families gone? By use of this term I mean families that reverence God.
 - a. They are disappearing rapidly. They are disappearing from society due to the high rate of immorality, divorce, dead-beat dads, child abuse, and juvenile crime.
 - b. They are also disappearing just because of a general lack of reverence for God in our culture. Unfortunately that irreverent disposition finds its way into most churches. Sometimes you even find families in the church that don't care much about one another and seem not to care much about God. You often see families that don't spend much time together either in or out of the assembly. You will even see families in some churches where it is the grandparents who are raising the kids. Where did the parents go? What has happened to the godly families?
2. It should be a part of our mission in the local church to strengthen and support godly families and encourage them in every way that we can—while at the same time being sensitive and nurturing to those families that are less than ideal, that are broken and hurting.
3. In the lesson before us let us explore some things that godly families can do together in the local church. I do not want to limit this just to those families where a mother and father are found in the home. I want it to include the single parent family and that family where only one parent is a Christian. These are things that every family in the local church can take part in.

The Lesson:

I. Some examples of godly families in the Bible—who did things together.

- A. In ancient times there were godly families who stayed together and served God together.
 1. There were families in the days of Nehemiah who worked together and worshipped together, Nehemiah 3:12. Shallum and his daughters worked together in rebuilding a portion of the wall in Jerusalem. I find it to be very sad that some parents today cannot (or will not) get their children to help them do the Lord's work in the local church. The children may be deeply involved in other activities, but are not involved at all in God's work. This doesn't have to be. There is room in the kingdom for families to work together.
 2. In Nehemiah 8:2-3 it was families who came together to worship God and hear the reading of God's word. "All who could understand" is talking about their children who were old enough to comprehend God's word. Those families stayed from early morning until mid-day, and were reverent toward God. Some families can't sit still for a one hour service.
- B. In the New Testament we find families that served God together.
 1. Luke tells us in Acts 21:4-6 that Christian men came together with their wives and children to pray with Paul and bid him farewell to Jerusalem. These families showed up together in order to encourage Paul and hold up the hands of this gospel preacher. I'm sure this meant a great deal to Paul. I have had families in this church that have done the same for some of us who have gone to Africa. I am talking about parents and kids involved together in encouraging us and helping with the work.
 2. In Acts 21:8-10 Luke records Paul's stay in the home of Philip and his family. It is encouraging when parents and their sons and daughters are all faithful Christians and who open their homes and are hospitable to brethren.
- C. We could mention other Bible families, but let's see some practical things you can do.

II. What godly families can do together in the local church.

- A. Godly families can worship God together.
 1. Families can do what Hebrews 13:15; 10:25 teach and do it together as a family unit.
 2. Families can sing, pray and read the Bible together. What if a family decided they would do the Bible reading together? Would that not be a good thing to participate in?
 3. But even in the worship assemblies, families can worship together. Teach your little children to sing instead of giving them a coloring book to pass the time in worship. I like it when I see some dads holding their kids and helping them imitate the song leader's motions with his hands.
 4. I like the case of Cornelius who brought his family together to hear God's word—even before he became a Christian, Acts 10:24.

- B. Godly families can serve others in the local church together.
 1. We need to teach our children the value of doing the work of God. What better way to do that than to engage them in the work we are doing, Titus 2:14; 3:1, 8, 14.
 2. Greet guests to our assemblies as a family; visit the hospital together as a family; visit shut-ins and widows together as a family. There is plenty to do in the Lord's kingdom; why not do it together with the whole family! Pick one day a week and do one activity together in the Lord's work. Like Joshua, serve the Lord with your family, Joshua 24:15.
 3. Do you want your children to practice pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27)? If so, include them in your visitation. Take them with you. Teach them to help others, and speak to others. Don't leave them at home in front of the TV, on the computer, or the phone. It will do your children great good to get out and visit hurting, needy saints. They will grow up to be giving people who love to help others, instead of selfish, self-centered people.
- C. Godly families can seek the lost together.
 1. I treat this as a separate point from the previous, not to exclude it from the work of the local church, but because it is something we tend to exclude our kids from. We think that our kids can't be involved in evangelism, that it is limited to adults.
 2. When you read Acts 8:4 do you think it was just adults who were forced out of Jerusalem? Families were forced to leave the city. All could be involved in evangelism in some way, if nothing more than encouraging their parents. The fact that families were forced from their homes was a witness to all the world that Christian dads and moms were willing to risk everything—even the lives of their children to stand firm for Jesus Christ. A family together, being forced from their home, had to have an impact on preaching to lost souls.
 3. Your family can host a Bible study together. The whole family can pass out flyers together in your neighborhood inviting folks to a church service. It has been my observation that kids are the best at inviting friends to come to worship. Kids, get your parents involved; take them with you when you are going to invite someone to a special service!
- D. Godly families can work together to qualify men for godly leadership and service.
 1. The Lord's church has a great need for elders and deacons today, just as it did in the first century, Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1.
 2. A major element of the requirements for a godly elder or deacon involves family, 1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5, 11-12; Titus 1:6.
 3. Men, you can make becoming an elder or a deacon a goal in your life and work toward it. Bring your family together and talk with them about this important place in the local church, and then work together with your family to qualify yourself to fill this role. Study the scriptures to see what you have to do with your family so that your family requirement is met. Then you will be on your way to being qualified for this great work.
 4. Wives and children, you can support the head of your family in his preparation for these works. You can not only encourage him, but you can also live in a godly way that will help qualify him for this good work. Your life may well determine whether or not the church has your husband or father as one who will serve in these roles.

Conclusion:

1. It was a former president who encouraged a program in our schools called "No Child Left Behind." And while some people ridicule programs like that, the intent behind that program is noble. It says, "We will not leave any of our children behind. We want every child to learn to read, write, do math and learn the basics that every child needs to succeed in America." If that program has failed, it is because parents have been willing to leave their kids behind, parents who are unwilling to work to help their kids learn and keep up with the other kids.
2. Can we make "No Child Left Behind" a reality in this church? I am a father of two grown children. I now have four grandchildren. I do not want my grandkids left behind. I want those children, as well as your children, to be deeply engaged in the work of God. Let us buy in to the fact that husbands, wives, sons and daughters can serve the Lord together. Serving the Lord together is what godly families in the local church are all about. And, even when one parent is missing, the other parent will receive encouragement from this church to carry on such activities without the missing spouse.
3. But, to do this, to have godly families, you have to make it happen. If you really love your spouse, and you really love your children, and you really love your Lord, you can and will make it happen.