



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Planting the Seed of Faith
in the Next Generation

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THEME Strengthen the Family

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Church is family. The next generation of this church is our family. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians that as we become disciplers, we become spiritual parents. Parents and/or spiritual parents need to solemnly take on the responsibility to parent the next generation, both in our own houses and in the House of the Lord.

FOUR STEPS TO PLANT THE S.E.E.D. OF FAITH IN THE GENERATIONS

1. SALVATION

A famous researcher, George Barna, found that children are the most important population segment to minister to because of their spiritual teachability and developmental openness. Barna argued that a child's moral development is set by the age of nine. He found that children converted to Christianity before their teen years are more likely to remain "absolutely committed" to Christianity in adulthood.

"It is during those years – the 4/14 window – that people develop their frames of reference for the remainder of their life. Habits related to the practice of one's faith develop when one is young and change surprisingly little over time," said Barna.

This is the window of opportunity that we must seize in developing our children's faith. The best gift we can give anyone is salvation. Everything we read in Psalm 78 is meaningless if not for salvation. Everything good that it talks about - the praiseworthy deeds of God (v.4), the law that He established (v.5) and the God whom we have learnt to trust (v.7) only applies when someone has found God.

2. ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Psalm 78:4 *"We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done."*

When we fail to engage and educate our children or spiritual children, it is like failing to water a plant. The 'seed' of salvation may be planted. However, if we do not let them hear or see the goodness of God by 'watering' the plant, it will not grow.

As parents, actively seize opportunities to converse with your children at home. Engage them with questions

and conversations about God. Spend time worshipping together. For spiritual parents, look out for opportunities in conversations to talk about life and use them as teachable moments. It takes time for children to grasp and understand spiritual truths. However, perseverance is key. Persevere in engaging and educating them and they will grow up spiritually to bear fruit one day. When that happens, they in turn will plant their own seed into new ground for a fresh harvest.

3. EXAMPLE

Psalm 78:7-8 *“Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds, but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors...”*

Children form their impressions of Father God through what they see of their actual earthly fathers or father figures in their lives. That is their model and template of how they understand our Father God operates. When the fathers, forefathers or the ancestors set bad examples, repercussions are felt down the family line.

We cannot tell our children how important church and cell group are if we do not set the example with the choices we make. We choose to bring our kids to cell group and we choose to serve even if it inconveniences us because we must show them what it looks like to put God first. The inconvenience is nothing compared to the payoff of training them up in godliness. Children, both biological and spiritual, are watching our decisions. How they will live their life is shaped by the example we set for them.

4. DISCIPLINE

Psalm 78:8 *“They would not be like their ancestors — a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.”*

We need to start early in helping our children hold on to the right thing by inculcating godly habits in them. Help them cultivate the habit of doing fundamental spiritual disciplines like worship, bible-reading and prayer, such that these disciplines become part of their life.

The same applies to our spiritual children. We must be very intentional about getting in the habit of cultivating the above-mentioned disciplines. These do not usually start with a desire. They start with discipline that gradually breeds delight and eventually leads to desire.

CONCLUSION

Psalms 78 was written by Asaph. His sons were also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 25:1 and 2 Chronicles 20:14. Asaph's spiritual legacy passed down through many generations of descendants because he raised his sons to worship and pursue God only.

Arise like Asaph and plant the S.E.E.D. of Salvation, Engagement, a godly Example, and Discipline that will bear much fruit. The best thing we can do for those whom we truly love is to plant the S.E.E.D. of Jesus in their hearts.

QUESTIONS

1. Who is an example of godly parenting (be it biological or spiritual) to you? What have you learnt from this person or couple?

2. Which of the four areas – Salvation, Engagement/Education, Example, Discipline – do you need to focus your efforts on now? Share the situation/context with the group.

3. Pray for a vision for the next generation and share with the cell group what your commitment and contribution to it might be.