

Daddy's Duty
Sermon June 18, 2017

Once, a little boy was asked about the difference between Mother's Day and Father's Day. The little guy said: "Father's Day is just like Mother's Day, only you don't spend as much on the gift."

There is a cartoon about a family climbing hills. The mother is leading the group; the father is a bit behind them. Some kids are still behind the father, picking some stones from the road. Suddenly a little boy starts to run, crying out for his mom about his bleeding knees. "Mommy, mommy..." He runs crying mommy for a few frames until he comes upon dad. He unexpectedly stops and without emotion he says, "Hi Daddy," and continues on his way, crying "Mommy!!!"

We, as fathers, have to recognize and admit that, in most cases, for children their mother is the most important and, in time of need, they are looking for their mothers. But in many cases, when children try to understand God, they are looking at their father, and the father's great example can help them to create their relationship with God. And this is because we call God our Heavenly Father.

Research shows that children take their spiritual lead from their father. If both father and mother go to church, 72% of the children will also go to church when they grow up. If only the father goes to church, the percentage drops to 55%. However, if only the mother goes to church, only 15% of those children will go to church when they are grown. It is up to fathers to help their children to make a living connection with God.

Dear fathers and grandfathers, our huge responsibility is to make good choices in order to be a man of God, in order to lead our children to God. Our children have to see whom we serve, and who is the most important for us.

Last week, in a TV show, I saw a wedding, where the groom said to his bride: "I love you, and I have chosen to serve the Lord Jesus Christ with you." To help a child to grow into such a great relationship with God takes time and a strong commitment from we fathers.

Often we launch a lot of responsibilities on our wives' shoulders, but this is one of our most important responsibilities: to help our children to know who the Heavenly Father is. Based on research, it is clearly our choice and our responsibility.

Austin L Sorensen says that "a child is not likely to find a father in God unless he finds something of God in his father".

Paul in Ephesians 5:1 is asking the fathers to be "an imitator of God". That means that we have to be an active presence in our children's lives. We have to imitate God in such a way that our children can see how real God is. If we are to be imitators of God, we must be a walking illustration of who God is. We must walk worthy of our calling, we must walk humbly before God and our children, and we have to provide a picture of the perfect love God has for our children.

I read about a survey which was made in an elementary school. Children were asked about the ten most appreciated qualities for dads:

1. He takes time for me.
2. He listens to me.
3. He plays with me.
4. He invites me to go places with him.
5. He lets me help him.
6. He treats my mother well.
7. He lets me say what I think.
8. He's nice to my friends.
9. He only punishes me when I deserve it.
10. He isn't afraid to admit when he's wrong.

As we analyze this survey we can see that the first 5 comments involve time. For our children, LOVE is spelled TIME.

I am regretting deeply, that I, as a minister, did not give enough time for my children. I was running back and forth to please my parishioners who were in need, and I did not spend enough time with my growing children. I preached that, for our children, the father's career is not the most important but the time he spends with children is. I taught that but I did not live accordingly and this is my life's biggest regret. If I would be able to turn the clock back, I would be a much better father.

Dr. James Dobson is one of the greatest child psychologists who wrote many books. He says that the average father spends less than 1 minute in face to face conversation with his children every day!!! How can we imitate God's love if we don't sacrifice to allow our children to have our time and our presence?

Children learn who God is by how we are. For this, we as fathers have to be the picture of God's love in your children's lives. Children need to see Christ's love in us. At the same time, we have to be successful in God's way to empower them to study and to work honestly. Our responsibility is to instruct and guide our children to do God's will, to obey His will, to accept and respect His authority in our lives, and also to show that God is a loving, caring and leading God.

I read a great quote from Daniel Webster who said: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

I think, dear fathers and grandfathers, also mothers and grandmothers, that there are many tough choices in life to make. The most important of all of these is choosing to be God's men and women, and choosing to instruct and discipline our children with love and care.

We can make such an impact in our children's lives if we will imitate God with humbleness by lovingly leading ourselves and other. Let's continue to love our children according to God's will and spend as much time with them as they need. Amen