

MINISTERING TO THE FAMILY

“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:14-15)

St. John Chrysostom writes, *“The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together. Men will take up arms and even sacrifice their lives for the sake of this love . . . Because when harmony prevails, the children are raised well, the household is kept in order, and neighbors, friends and relatives praise the result. Great benefits, both for families and states, are thus produced. When it is otherwise, however, everything is thrown into confusion and turned upside-down.”* (Chrysostom, On Marriage, pp. 44-45)

Statistics from Contemporary Culture (Barna Research Group).

In a survey to men and women who are married:

The single most important relationship in their lives is the relationship with their spouse.

- ♦ 60% of marriages today end in divorce.

In a survey to parents with children:

The greatest joy for parents in this life is their experience with their children.

- ♦ Most parents readily admit they have no clue what they are doing as parents.

Most adults agree the most important thing to give their children is the opportunity to succeed.

- ♦ 1 out of 3 children born in America are born to an unwed mother.

Family is one of the three top priorities in life for Americans.

- ♦ How do we allocate our time in a week – most Americans spend more time at their job, with their hobbies, watching TV – instead of spending meaningful time with their family.

In a lifetime, the average American will:

- ♦ Spend six months sitting at traffic lights waiting for them to change.
- ♦ Spend one year searching through desk clutter looking for misplaced objects.
- ♦ Spend eight months opening junk mail.
- ♦ Spend two years trying to call people who are not in or whose lines are busy.
- ♦ Spend five years waiting in lines.
- ♦ Spend three years in meetings.
- ♦ Learn how to operate 20,000 different things, from soda machines to can openers.

The average person will:

- ♦ Commute 45 minutes every day.
- ♦ Be interrupted 73 times every day (every 8 minutes)
- ♦ Travel 7,700 miles every year
- ♦ Watch 1,700 hours of television every year

In another recent survey in what children want from their families – we see some interesting statistics:

What children want?

- ♦ Unconditional love/feeling connected
- ♦ Better communication with parents
- ♦ More time spent with parents
- ♦ Authentic respect from their parents
- ♦ Purpose in life (wanting to live another day)
- ♦ Greater acceptance of their friends by their parents

Five basic principles for Families:

1. To live under Christ. (Ephesians 5:23)
2. To Provide Companionship. (Matthew 19:5)
3. To Nurture Faith in Children. Deuteronomy 6:6-7
4. To Participate in the larger family of Faith.
5. Families should pray together.

SOME IDEAS FOR FAMILY MINISTRY

- ♦ Focus on common family concerns
- ♦ Be sensitive to different family situations
- ♦ Facilitate Family Cooperation
- ♦ Let Families Communicate
- ♦ Begin with non-threatening Activities
- ♦ Don't let Parents Dominate
- ♦ Avoid Addressing just one Generation
- ♦ Be Sensitive to Participants without their Families
- ♦ Keep Costs Down
- ♦ Plan Worship