

THE HOME – FATHER

“My son, hear the instruction of thy father” (Prov. 1:8).

We are living at a time when much emphasis is being put on the role of women in society. It is my intention to deal with that in my next article but today I do believe that we need to get back to the biblical concepts regarding the family. A father is very much a part of the biblical outline regarding the family and from the outset I must be honest and state that in the Bible the role of the father is one of authority. However if we are to speak of authority then it must also be stated that this is linked to responsibility as well.

The word “father” also places emphasis on paternal relationships relating to children. I would like to share three thoughts with you regarding a father in the home:

The Father is to teach his Children

Today we find that matters such as morals, religion and ethics are left to mothers or even to the school and in some instances to the church. The Bible and in this verse in Proverbs does not make provision for such a concept. It is in fact the responsibility of the father to teach and train the children. One of the things that I can remember from my youth is the expression “Children must be seen and not heard”. Whilst this might have seemed a good method of discipline, it is in fact flawed. Children should be heard and father should listen and instruct their children. Many of us as fathers have possibly fallen short and have failed to listen to our children and excused our failure by saying that we were too tired or that children do not know what we know. If we do not listen to them then they will not talk and we will never be in a position to help them when they need us.

The curriculum

Here four things come to mind:

The father is to teach the divine Word. Sadly most men do not know the Word in as much depth as the women. In Proverbs 4:1-4 we see that we should learn the words of the father. Many might argue that this relates to human parents but should this not also apply to our heavenly Father? Do we fathers teach our children the Word? Let us get to grips with the Word and become the people God wants us to be.

The father is to teach his children to be industrious. Once again in Proverbs 10:5 we see a contrast between gathering a harvest and sleeping in summer. A harvest comes as a result of preparation and hard work. As soon as the harvest is ready we must take the opportunity and go and reap. Usually a father sets the example for the child.

The father is to correct, chasten, and train his children. I must be honest and say that Proverbs 29:15, 17 can be taken out of context and be used to support corporal punishment. I merely want to point out that in our world today we just allow children to do what they like without any parental intervention. This type of attitude is a recipe for destroying your children.

The father should teach by a good example. Proverbs 13:22 states that a good man leaves an inheritance. Whilst no type of inheritance is mentioned we can assume that it is righteousness in character seeing that he is “good”. A close examination of many divorce cases will reveal that men have failed to be good examples to their wives and their children in particular. We can never turn back the clock on the actions we have done but we can do our utmost to provide a proper example for our children before it is too late.

The results

When a father accepts his responsibility to teach and he teaches the right things then it is quite safe to say that there are two things he can expect:

He will know the joy of a wise son. Proverbs 15:20 has been a reality in my family life, as I have watched my daughter grow up and express her values in life. There are many times when I have stopped and listened to what my daughter says and marvel at her wisdom.

His children will give him honour rather than shame and disgrace. Right in the middle of Proverbs 23:24-25 we see this truth. Over the years I have watched my daughter face terrible adversity and come out on top. Every time she has overcome a challenge I have been proud of her but at the same time I must stress that we as fathers should be prepared to walk with our children. When they walk through the valley then we should walk with them and just be there when they are on the mountaintops.

I at no time wish to deny the importance and role of motherhood but in Proverbs we see the father as being as the primary person in child-rearing. It is time for fathers to assume their responsibilities rather than neglecting them or delegating them to others.

Recently a person working with street children said that the children of today do not have any discipline or respect for their elders. Here I would suggest that this is all because fathers do not fulfil their God given role.

We can not go and blame our children for failing us if we have not even tried to play our part. We dare not expect the pastor or the teacher to be responsible for providing our children with values and then get angry when those values might be contrary to what we hold to.

May I also be bold as to say that the very lack of a father figure is bound to bring confusion and envy into the lives of impressionable children who may be in same sex marriages. As adults we are so involved in our selfish pursuits that we fail to think of the impact that our actions might have on our children.