

A Family That Serves Together, Grows Together – 1 Timothy 4:8,11,12,15

Intro: Imagine with me...

Imagine two plants on either side of a fence. One gets watered the other doesn't. Which one grows? Liken this to the parent who is sacrificing their child's growth at the altar of their personal development.

Close your eyes and imagine your child at 30 and still living in your house coz they can't survive out there.

What has this got to do with serving?

Let us start at home, when the kids are young, 2 years or so.

Q: What do parents do when they get home and need to cook or do other 'stuff' and yet the kids need attention?

A: Regularly, shoo them off when they could be learning a life skill. (Eg: 3yr old could be pounding garlic to a nursery rhyme they learnt that day – therefore learning that they have value to add to others and what they do contributes to a bigger goal)

Q: What do you want your kid to be when they grow up? What skills will you be teaching your kids this Christmas when the home manager is on leave?

Paint picture of a kid whose life parents are planning to be a surgeon, yet never equip with skills to survive university, and the first needle they handle is on a cadaver; or you push them to be an architect, yet you stopped them from playing with Legos at 7 years of age.

There was a surgeon who had both pockets torn yet was about to stitch a teen's wound – teen asked how they will manage and yet they cannot stitch their own clothes.

“This is a call to deliberately involve the child and their input; tapping their talents, developing their sense of belonging and therefore developing their wellbeing needs to be amplified.

We are social beings. If you don't give your child a place to belong they will find it for themselves. If home is where they belong they'll thrive.

Let us look at what God's word has to say about this.

Ephesians 6:4 – Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

1 Timothy 4:12 – Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

- The secular world is teaching our children to stand for their rights and not be looked down upon
- As parents, and with help from the church, we are the ones mandated to show them how to set an example to believers by being an example ourselves.
 - We want them to serve – are we serving? Have they ever seen us volunteer towards anything? Or do they see us sign cheques and donate cash then sit back proudly?
 - In school interviews – and more so university – they are now looking for all rounded children. Children who are aware of whatever is going on in their world and are passionate about solving at least one problem. What is that for your child? For you?

Spirituality is caught, not taught

How can we, as parents, be the first spiritual ministers to our children? Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Examples from the bible: Timothy was guided by his mother and grandmother. Eli misled his sons

Quote: Your actions are speaking so loudly I can't hear what you're saying. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Quote: "Small wins do not combine in a neat, linear, serial form, with each step being a demonstrable step closer to some predetermined goal," wrote Karl Weick, a prominent organizational psychologist.

Conclusion:

Ask your neighbour:

1. What are you committing to as a parent?
2. What are you helping your child commit to?
3. What can you commit to as a family?
4. Will you?

Your conversations this month should be based on these four questions.