



Establishing the Home Pt 2: Where Were the Children?

January 17, 2010

Text: Matt 19:1-17

- Last week, we asked a question: “Is Family Integration for CRCC?”
- *I told you then that I do believe God is moving this church towards it.*
- In Voddie Baucham's Book, Family Driven Faith, he quotes an alarming statistic: that 70-88% of "Christian" teens leave the faith by the end of their second year of college. As we mentioned last week, our journey here was birthed out of frustration.
- So Family Integration puts the discipleship responsibility back on Mom and Dad, and the church equips, encourages, and expects them to take the lead. Children worship with their parents, the church isn't pressured to become a Chuck E. Cheese, and most importantly, God's Word is obeyed!
- I also said that for me, the principles of Family Integration were a "duh" moment, and that I'm as excited and as confident as I've ever been that this teaching and timing is the hand and plan of Christ!

Family Integration: A Biblical Survey *(A Very Special thanks to Pastor Jason Lapat for his research here, notes, and his consent for me to use it.)*

1. Matt 19 (our Text) - There was teaching on marriage and divorce, then a teaching of salvation and the cost of following Christ, and in the middle, a sharp rebuke for those who would hinder children from being near Christ as He was teaching and ministering. There were no classes, rooms, or special programs. The children were right there.
2. Deut 29:10-12 All of you are standing today in the presence of the LORD your God--your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, (11) together with your children and your wives, and the aliens living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. (12) You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God.
3. Joshua 8:35 - There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the aliens who lived among them.
4. 1 Samuel 1:28 - Samuel worshipped the Lord in the house of the Lord from the time he was weaned.
5. 1 Samuel 16,17 David, we could say many things about him. From his childhood he worshipped God. David's father Jesse did not think much of him. David exercised a faith (as a youth) not known among all of the army of Israel.
6. 2 Chr 20 – When Jehoshaphat (King of Judah) cried out to the Lord for help against Moab and Ammon, and proclaimed a fast for all of Judah, verse 13 says, “All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the Lord. (14) Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. (15) He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's.'”
7. 2 Chronicles 34 - An eight year old boy began to reign as king in Jerusalem. The bible says “he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,” At age sixteen, Josiah “began to seek after the God of David.”

8. Ezra 10:1 - While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites--men, women and children--gathered around him. They too wept bitterly.
9. Proverbs 22:6 - Let us "train" our children in the real thing. Children's church trains our children for children's church.
10. Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. (Joel 2:15-16)
11. Mark 10:13-16 - The disciples tried to keep children away, maybe the disciples thought that what Christ was about to say or teach was not age appropriate for children, maybe the disciples thought that children would distract others from coming, maybe the disciples did not want to be burdened with children under their feet. Whatever the case Jesus rebuked them.
12. John 6:9 - This lad followed Jesus to a remote place and gave his lunch to the disciples. Christ took this lad's lunch performed a great miracle. Please note, where was he?
13. Ephesians 6:1-3 The apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church at Ephesus, to be read to the church. In this letter he addressed children supposing that children were to be present during the reading of it.
14. Colossians 3:20 The apostle Paul also wrote a letter to the church at Colosse, to be read to the church. In this letter he addressed children, supposing that children were to be present during the reading of it.

So where were the children in Scripture?

7 Reasons for Family Integration *(Adapted from Pastor Lapat's notes. Thanks again!)*

1. Of all the NT instructions given for church practice, children's ministries are absent. This does not mean segregating children into age groups to minister to them is sinful or somehow suggests a poor motive, but there is no evidence, command or model to do so in the Old or New Testaments. In a Family integrated church, the responsibility of every child will solely be upon the parent or the designated shepherding family.
2. Pastors are to provide spiritual food for the church (1 Tim 3:2) and fathers are to provide spiritual food for their own families (Deut 6:4-7). A Family Integrated church avoids any mixed messages.
3. In a Family Integrated church, children are exposed to the entire church service. This gives parents oversight of what their children are being taught, provides connection/growth points after the service, and provides protection for the church concerning a child's safety.
4. Many child/teen ministries are designed to entertain. It has been said "what you win them with is what you win them to." A Family Integrated church moves us away from this failed model.
5. Many busy families never do anything as a family; family integrated worship makes the clear undeniable statement: "Be a family."
6. Children will learn more from their peers than they will from their teachers. This is one of the tragedies of age segregated ministries. Good Christian families will go to great lengths to keep certain worldly influences away from their children. A child of theirs will befriend another child (at church) and will be exposed to the very things that the parents have been so careful to guard against. Dad and Mom are nowhere to be found to deal with these things as their children are introduced to them. All of these things could be taking place unknown to the teacher and the parents. How many of us parents have seen our own children attracted to

the wrong kind of kids? Parents will have a greater influence in their own children's lives by being with them.

7. As we see from the staggering losses during college, age segregation has not worked. More on this next week, but I love the way Scott Brown (Director of the National Center of Family Integrated Churches) put it:

By joining in the main services, children will be experiencing the teaching of God's Word and beginning to understand the importance of preaching.

Only God knows what a child gets from hearing father pray.

Only God knows what a child gets out of hearing God's people worship.

Only God knows what a child gets out of seeing men standing up and speaking of the things of God.

Only God knows what a child gets out of experiencing Christian community.

It is really much simpler than you might think. The attitude should be: the church is family time. Our family, and the family of God. We enjoy eating out together as a family. We enjoy going to the beach together as a family. Then, why do we not enjoy worship and instruction and fellowship as a family with our spiritual family of brothers and sisters?