



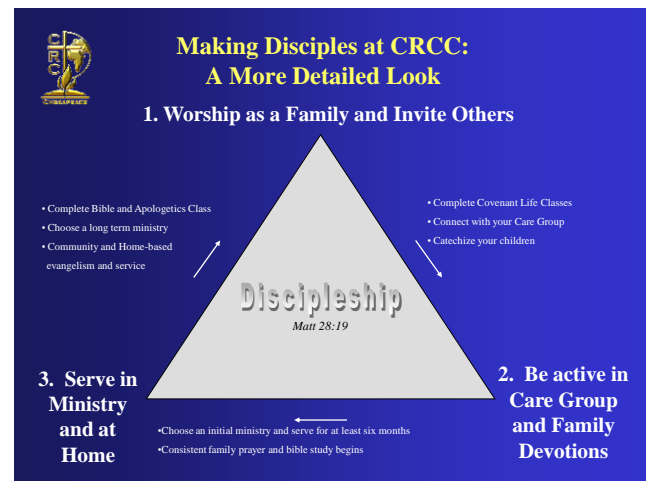
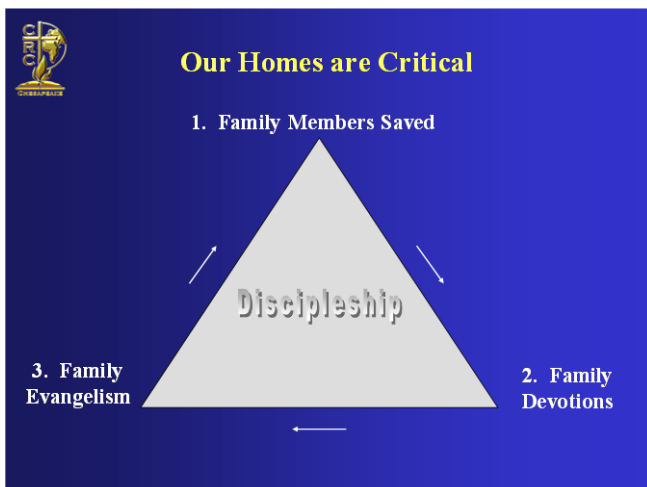
Establishing the Home Pt 3: More Thoughts on Family Integration

January 24, 2010

Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-13

Before we begin:

1. Let me say that I hope this series of messages doesn't seem like overkill to you. What I mean is I hope you aren't getting the feeling I'm trying to force something upon you.
2. But saints, let me try to explain my heart. I began Closer Walk (now CRCC) nearly 13 years ago for the express purpose of pulling youth out of darkness and pointing them towards the love of Christ. Many of us labored for years, using every idea we could think of.
3. But our statistics still mirrored those in Voddie's book: that 70-88% of "Christian" teens leave the faith by the end of their freshman (not second) year of college.
4. It has been said that "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is the definition of insanity." CRCC is "crazy" but we are not insane! Something must change.
5. Dave Ramsey teaches that people won't change until the pain of where they are exceeds the pain of change. To see those who never accepted the Gospel live in spiritual bondage and die is painful enough; but to see those RAISED IN CHURCH abandon Christ and His Body is excruciating!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Are we willing to DO WHAT IT TAKES to raise sons and daughters who LOVE CHRIST?
6. **Remember, this is not a matter of what "isn't" in Scripture; it's a matter of what "IS" in Scripture. And this process isn't just about Sunday services; it's about TOTAL FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP....across the board.**
7. So, it is my desire to modify CRCC discipleship structures in keeping with what we see in Scripture, creating a model at the church building of what home and family should look like.



Looking at the Damage Age Segregation has done (Special thanks to Reb Bradley and www.familyministries.com for use of the below adaptation from their article on Age Integration in Ministry.)

1. *It deprives the younger of the ministry God means them to receive from the older.*
 - Titus 2:4-5 teaches older women to train younger women.
 - Now more than ever, senior and mature saints are needed as mother and father figures. Now more than ever, families must open their hearts and homes to youth who are broken and aren't being disciplined. Now more than ever this is needed!
2. *It deprives the older of the ministry God means them to receive from the younger.*
 - Young and older alike, if they are believers, have spiritual gifts which God intends be used to bless one another. (1 Cor 12:1-27)
 - Little ones model for those older what it is like to receive God's kingdom (Matt 18:3; Ps 8:2)
 - Those older must welcome little ones into fellowship, because Jesus taught that to welcome a little one in his name was to welcome him. (Mat 18:5)
 - Jesus actually rebuked the disciples for trying to keep children away while the disciples were spending time in "adult" fellowship with him. (Mat 19:13-14)
3. *It reinforces the immaturity of the younger by depriving them of adults as their peers.*
 - Our number one goal for our children is not play (although nothing is wrong with play); it's discipleship and maturity in Christ.
 - But we know that "association brings assimilation" to a very large degree. "Bad company corrupts good character." (1 Cor 15:33)
 - We become like those we spend time with:
 - *Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm. (Prov 13:20)*
 - *The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. (Prov 12:26)*
 - Those older provide positive models for those younger.
4. *It creates a generation gap, the very thing we are trying to prevent!*
 - Children and teens develop the idea that they have nothing in common with and no use for senior citizens and other adults, so they become intolerant of them.
 - *(By the way, the word "adult" has been co-opted by sin. What is an adult movie? When I was a kid, being sent out because of "adult time" meant go in another room "child" while we smoke, drink, cuss, and watch stuff we shouldn't!)*
 - Older folks learn to be impatient toward children and become annoyed at their presence.
5. *It warps a young person's view of their identity in Christ.*
 - Age Segregation reinforces to children their "passive" identity rather than their "contributing member" identity (1 Cor 12:1-27).
 - It teaches kids to see themselves as "outsiders" – that the main service is for adults and not them.
 - It reinforces a "youth subculture" identity rather than a family identity. The Body of Christ has admirably spent millions trying to reach the "youth sub-culture in a way that youth like" and we have seen the results.

- It communicates to the young that they cannot understand pulpit teaching and need to receive instruction bathed in entertainment and fun.
6. *It fosters a self-centered view of church life both in the older and the younger.*
 - Catering to specific ages with age-tailored programs communicates subtly to the participants that the programs exist to satisfy them and cultivates the perspective: “What will this ministry do for me?”
 - It helps produce Christians who are more concerned about *being* served than *servicing*. They develop the vision that they are “passengers” on a cruise ship, when in fact the Bible portrays all believers as “crew members” on a battleship.
 - It minimizes the growth opportunities of being with those of dissimilar values and interests.
 7. *It limits the vision for outreach .*
 - Segregating people by ages for the purpose of evangelizing the unbelievers who visit the church is a modern church practice. For approximately the first 1900 years of church history, church gatherings were considered to be times for discipling and equipping believers for the work of evangelism in their homes and communities.
 - Those who depend upon the church to draw in and evangelize the unbelieving friends of their children, often miss the opportunities they have to do a more effective job at home, with none of the side effects of age segregation.
 - Please read the article I posted on my blog: “Restoring the Household for Equipping and Evangelism.”
 8. *It divides up families and contributes to their breakdown.*
 - Please understand saints...the priority of the family identity is increasingly weakened as social groups grow in importance.
 - Think about how much time our children spend away from their parents, and with others their own age, on social networking sites, and in classrooms. These external social groups create gratifying relationships and friendship bonds which many times rise in importance in the heart of the child over bonds with Mom and Dad.
 - Families come to believe the error that peer relationships are more important than the family relationship, ie: teens begin to identify with youth subculture more than parents and siblings; they choose friends over family.
 - Should ministry contribute to this process?
 9. *It causes parents to miss the chance of teaching children to be disciplined and reverent from an early age concerning the things of God.*
 - “Our toddlers should not be characterized by rank disobedience.” FDF, pp 109-110.
 - Can you think of a place more important than church (other than your own home) where our children need to be taught how to behave?
 10. And lastly, age segregation simply has not worked. If we are to turn the tide of apostasy, it is my belief (and those of the elders and pastors of this house) that the church should model and encourage families to learn, worship, and pray together...the very things that should be happening at home. ☺

Next Week’s Message: “A Plan for the Home.”