

Our Church Youth Program

Doug Phillips

I have the privilege of worshiping in a small, family-integrated church. When asked about our various church programs, I explain that we are blessed with more than thirty different organizations to which our members belong -- they are called families. I further explain that we have more than sixty youth directors -- they are called parents. In fact, we have such a full schedule of events that there is a mandatory activity every day of the week -- it is called family worship.

The Phillips Family Youth Group and friends visit with the Scott Brown Family Youth Group at their home in North Carolina

Both through the preaching of the word and informal shepherding of the congregation, the church leadership aspires to equip our dozens and dozens of youth pastors to successfully minister to the diverse needs of the many individuals and special interest groups within their respective organizations. Because we don't want to leave anybody behind, we have instructed these church organizations to reach out to the young, the old, and the infirm -- the singles, the divorced, or abandoned -- everybody, such that we will have a comprehensive outreach for every special interest group represented by the membership of our assembly of believers. As a result, these organizations sponsor events that include hospitality and evangelism outreach, one-room schoolhouses (usually meeting in the family den), foreign missions (to Mexico), and literally hundreds of other activities designed to meet the needs of the organizational members.

The amazing thing is that our financial budget to accomplish these goals is \$0.00. Well, that is not exactly true -- we do spend some money on photocopying, tape distribution, and various other training tools that we place in the hands of our youth directors.

As an example to the congregation, the elders are required to be youth directors, too. In fact, if the elders don't manage their own youth programs well, they have to step down from being elders.

With so much responsibility on their hands, our youth directors have to really get their collective acts together. (I happen to be one of the youth directors, so I speak from personal experience.) They have to study God's Word more than they have ever studied before so they can wisely lead their organization. They have to be creative so they can solve the diverse problems of their special interest groups. They have to learn to be patient. They have to learn to love. They even have to reprioritize their lives.

This last part is crucial. Only by reprioritizing life, and structuring their organizations properly, will our youth directors be successful. They know that. They also know there is a price to pay. But most of them are willing to pay the price, because they have decided that the greatest activity they can do in this life is to be a youth pastor and to run a special interest organization called the Christian family.

Here is what we are discovering: The more we commit to faithfully shepherding our mini-congregations, the more blessing we experience. Moreover, the more we study what God's Word says about these little congregations, the more we see the wonder and the brilliance of God's plan of equipping the Church and transforming the entire culture through these often forgotten, twisted, and even maligned organizations called Christian households.

THE DOCTRINE of the CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD

Did you know that the Bible communicates at least seven crucial, culture-transforming missions for the Christian household? The household is the God-ordained seat of education. It is the first place where we are to develop and communicate a distinctively Christian aesthetic for culture. The home is not to be relegated to a mere place for consumption, but transformed into a powerful tool for industry and production. In the household (not the state welfare agency) we find God's true pattern for multi-generational, covenantal care. The home, not even the temple or church meeting house, has always been the God-ordained primary locus for daily worship. Our homes not only provide us with a platform to honor God's non-optional commands for one-anothering and hospitality, but they were designed to be the most powerful forums for evangelism and discipleship in the Christian's arsenal.

Of course, this vision for the Christian home presupposes a rigorous adherence to the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. Unless we presuppose the Holy Scripture, not the traditions of man or the present cultural patterns, as the starting point for any coherent worldview or cultural vision, our thinking will, by definition, be muddled. Furthermore, this household vision of victory presupposes an appreciation for the doctrine of biblical patriarchy, which teaches the necessity of leadership in the home by fathers committed to family-unifying policies and a vision for multi-generational faithfulness.

When the household is functioning according to these God-directed purposes, it becomes the most powerful instrument available for the Church of Jesus Christ, next to the Bible itself, in its arsenal of culture-transforming, kingdom-building tools. When properly understood, the doctrine of the Christian household is the antidote to the palsied, family-fragmenting efforts of modern churches to resist the world through man-centered programs which do little more than bring the philosophies and methodologies of the world into the Church of Jesus Christ.

Long live the Christian family! Long live biblical patriarchy and the victorious household!

GET THE TAPE

If you would like to learn more about the principles articulated in this e-mail, it would be my pleasure to send you a copy of my sermon tape "An Introduction to the Doctrine of

the Christian Home." See my P.S. below.

FAMILY VISION in 2003

As we approach 2003, may I suggest that now is the time to ask the Lord for a distinctively biblical family vision of victory. Please continue to visit our Web site for suggestions on how you can expand your vision and for exciting opportunities to join us as we do the same through our new Father and Daughter Discipleship Retreats, regional Uniting Church & Home conferences, New York-based Faith & Freedom Tour, Back to Patriarchy conferences, and much more.

Persevero,
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Vision Forum Ministries