

Why Do We Need Family Ministry?

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Steven Covey said it well when he penned these words, “I am convinced that if we as a society work diligently in every other area of life and neglect the family, it would be analogous to straightening deck chairs on the Titanic” (*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, 2).

The family is the primary agency that God has put in place to transmit His values from one generation to another. Family ministry plays a vital role in supporting families in this task, especially since the family is a prime target of the Enemy of our souls. Ellen White shared the sobering observation that, “It is Satan’s studied effort to pervert the marriage institution, to weaken its obligations and lessen its sacredness; for in no surer way could he deface the image of God in man and open the door to misery and vice” (*Patriarchs & Prophets*, 338). Disturbing research indicates that Christian couples are just as likely to divorce as non-Christian couples. If the Enemy is so intentional about destroying marriage and family, we ought to be just as intentional to preserve them. Especially in light of the devastating effects of divorce on children, church and society as a whole.

If we believe the counsel that “no work entrusted to human beings involves greater or more far-reaching results than does the work of fathers and mothers,” (*The Adventist Home*, 182), then we as a church must be proactive in empowering families to take back the responsibility of passing on healthy spiritual values and practices to their children. Christianity is about relationships, and the family is the primary context in which we learn how to relate to others in a healthy way.

Families are in desperate need of support both within our communities and within the church. We need family ministries because “as goes the family, so goes the church.” The most natural first recipients of our gospel sharing endeavours are the people in our households and families, but then, the mission of our home must extend beyond its own members. As we learn to live the gospel with each other, we are equipped to share it with those outside the family circle.

As long as an estimated 40% of marriages are ending in divorce; as long as we are losing over 50% of our youth by their 20s; as long as Britain remains the teenage pregnancy capital of Europe; as long as families are devastated by domestic violence, abuse, crippling debt, gang cultures and a host of other ills afflicting our society, we will need family ministry.

While it may not be practical for every church or group to have a family ministry department, every ‘church’ should have a ministry to families. As Covey concludes, “We begin life in a family, we end life in a family. From beginning to the end, its family.” (*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, 2).