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EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR TRAINING PARENTS IN
FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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May 2011

APPROVAL SHEET

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR TRAINING PARENTS IN
FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

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To Kristen

My Joy

My Crown

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NSYR	National Study of Youth and Religion
VFM	Vision Forum Ministries
ACFR	Alliance for Church and Family Reformation
NCFIC	National Center for Family Integrated Churches
FIC	Family-Integrated Church
FEM	Family-Equipping Model
FBM	Family-Based Model

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PREFACE

This research began with a big salad and an ice-cold Pibb. In the summer of 2008, while taking a class on relationships in the church, I asked my professor out on a date. Never could I have imagined that the lunch date would have been the starting point of what lies in the pages that follow. Never could I imagine that the Star Wars fanatic professor and his family would become such dear friends to Kristen and our family.

Dr. Jones has been more than just an insightful instructor. In addition to being a sounding board, he has been a guiding hand. Paul, in writing to the churches, often commended Timothy and others who were working side-by-side for the sake of the gospel. I have often felt like Paul's Timothy as Dr. Jones has opened door after door of opportunity for me to serve and impact ministries for the sake of the gospel. Thank you, Dr. Jones, for your friendship, trust, and continual encouragement. Thank you, too, for developing the Family Perspectives and Practices survey that has already demonstrated the state of our churches today, and will prayerfully bring reform to our churches and families tomorrow. The use of the survey in this study was invaluable to discovering the best practices of the churches that are effectively transforming families for the gospel.

I would be remiss if I failed to also acknowledge another friend whom God has brought into the lives of the Steenburg family. Dr. Pettegrew and his wife, Sharon, have been a joy to spend time with, and an encouragement to our young marriage. Dr. Pettegrew's insightful thoughts on the structure of this research and its methodology have been instrumental in assuring that the research would get the answers to the questions.

The design has progressed and improved through the relentless reading of Dr. Pettegrew and his greater understanding of how to best demonstrate the best practices of churches that are training parents for household family discipleship. Both of these men are more than spectators in the game of household family discipleship; they are active models of the underlying tenets necessary for multi-generational faithfulness.

I would like to thank Dr. Randy Stinson for his leadership in the School of Church Ministries and the sacrifices that role requires. I thank Dr. Brian Richardson for his undying commitment to the Word of God and how that is embedded in all of his classes through lecture and further through personal conversation. Dr. Michael Wilder has been a kind and caring individual from the day I interviewed for the program until now. Although a professor by title, he still has a pastor's heart.

The ink on this page will never be able to express the gratitude that I have for Kristen, my wife, and the help she has been on this amazing journey. She has sacrificed much to see the completion of this project. She has cared for her husband, our children, and our home. Her faithfulness to God and desire to honor and please Him has made this process possible. My love for her continues to grow with each step we take together. How could such an undeserving man be so blessed?

Finally, I would like to thank all the churches and participants who made this study possible. To my expert panel, thank you for your nominations, they were right on. To the churches, thank you for the exposure to your people and practices, they are both great. And to the families, thank you for letting me take a look at your lives.

W. Ryan Steenburg

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2011

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH CONCERN

The present concern reaches past the pages of this research and into the essence of Christian practice in the context of the family. Parents appear to be delinquent at the task of discipling their children (Wright and Graves 2008, 17-20; see also Haynes 2009, 36-37). This statement represents the crux about which many books have been written and ministry models established. Three models in particular claim to be in the process of realigning the efforts of the church in order to prepare parents for the household discipleship process. The primary concern, then, is which models of church ministry exhibit the best practical practices for churches to consider.

Introduction to the Research Problem

For the past century and a half church leadership has wrestled with how to best minister to the children and youth of the congregation. According to Francis Edward Clark, founder of the Society for Christian Endeavor (1881) the youth must be “set at work for the Master at once” (Clark 1903, 11-12). The result of Clark’s efforts was weekly meetings that were conducted by the youth, which formally denied the involvement of the parents. This segmentation would continue throughout the century. According to Mark Senter, the church of the baby boom era saw an influx of youth and the churches response resulted in the rise of the position of youth minister to oversee the segmented groups (Senter 1992, 142). Timothy Paul Jones notes that it was the

segmentation of earlier era's that led to the professionalization of the role of youth minister in the middle of the twentieth century (Jones 2011).

With the rise in popularity of the youth ministry position has come an increase in publications on how to do youth ministry. Aware of the concern confronting the church, scholars and theologians have struggled with the same question as they have published multiple volumes directing the youth minister on how to perform his duties. *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry* by Mike King, promotes a ministry style which seeks to establish the appropriate atmosphere where youth can experience genuine spiritual formation (King 2006, 11). King suggests this atmosphere will be defined by the relationships the youth worker has with the youth (King 2006, 69). Another text, *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus* by Mark Yaconelli, is a call for the youth worker to experience God (Yaconelli 2006, 25). Yaconelli contends that by drawing close to God, the youth worker will be better equipped to draw the youth towards God (Yaconelli 2006, 25). Still another, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* by Mark DeVries, proposes a two-fold strategy to train the parents and the extended family of the church (DeVries 2004, 101-06). Texts such as these, and others, fill the shelves of pastoral libraries in churches of all denominations. These titles, as well as others, serve as an attempt to prepare and regulate the office of youth minister in an effort to reach the youth for Christ.

Another historical question to consider is, "who *should* be reaching the youth for Christ?" Samuel Dike, at the turn of the twentieth century, took strides to place the responsibility to reach the youth on the shoulders of the parents. It is only in recent decades that Dike's propositions have gained popularity in various forms almost

completely detached from Dike himself. The proponents of this movement strive to get back to the basics of biblical instruction and seek to establish the parents as the primary disciplers of the youth of the church, and how determine how the church can best support the efforts.

Certain congregations have taken a therapeutic approach to the family by introducing care and counseling practices within the church in order to meet the needs of the individual family members. For these congregations, the remedy to the problem appears to exist in the mentality that if all members can be taught how to function within the greater whole, ministry is taking place. Although functioning under the appearance of a Christian ministry, these efforts often fail to include the gospel at the core of the ministry process and rely more heavily on psychotherapeutic methodologies.

For many, the concern for the youth is connected to the perceived crisis of youth leaving the church after graduating from high school. This perceived crisis over the dropout rates has led to conclusions, publications, and programs that focus on the function and role of the church in the life of the youth. An aspect that has received far less attention however, is the function and role of the church in the life of the family—specifically, the function and role of the church to train parents to fulfill their role as disciplers in the lives of their children. This research does not intend to demonstrate the next best church attendance retention program. This research intends to discover what is being done for parents, by the church, to fulfill their roles as primary disciplers, church retention aside.

The Primary Concern

The efforts to revive and reorganize the churches approach to youth and family

ministry are commendable. The primary concern for family discipleship, however, is that the family has failed to embrace the privilege and responsibility of discipling their children. Considering why this might be, certain scholars have observed that the Christian family has been under attack and a victim of certain outcomes due to social trends, the women's movement, science, medicine, and the political movement (Barton 2001, 5-8). In the face of much confusion, oppression, and distorted satisfaction with the church, certain parents have surrendered the privilege to disciple their children to the local church.

A broad range of scholars agree that the family is a primary context for faith formation. Christian Smith, author of *Soul Searching*, concluded that the "single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents" (Smith and Denton 2005, 261). Jeff Astley also notes in *The Family in Theological Perspective*, that the family is the central means of faith formation and the passing of tradition (Astley 1996, 199). The same author raises the concern of *what* faith and *what* traditions are being passed from one generation to the next. Astley further promotes that the church, or in Astley's terms, *the wider community*, should be active in the Christian education of the home (Astley 1996, 201).

The theological perspective will be explored more fully later, but it is the understanding of this research that from a theological perspective, the primary responsibility to disciple the children of the Christian home does not fall to the church or to a youth minister. According to certain passages of Scripture (ex., Deut 6:7, Prov 22:6, Eph 6:4) the primary responsibility for the discipleship of children falls to the parents and to the father, in particular. The church culture of the past century or so, however, has

slowly minimized the role of the parents as primary disciplers in the life of the child. The church has established programs for the various generations, systematically separating the children from their parents, and subtly communicating to the families that the church would provide adequate instruction to disciple their children (Jones 2009, 34).

A Case in Point

Steve Wright, author of *Apparent Privilege*, relates a story of a conversation he had with a gentleman named Frank. Frank and his wife faithfully took their children to church, kept them all involved in the youth group and other church functions, only to see their adult children walk away from Christianity. No one can ensure another's salvation, no matter how faithful one is in their efforts. Frank's concern, however, was that he thought he was doing the right thing by keeping his children so involved at church. Frank said of himself and his wife, "we believed that our job was to bring our boys to church" (Wright and Graves 2008, 13). Frank was devastated by the fact that no one had ever told him that the responsibility to disciple his children belonged to him and his wife (Wright and Graves 2008, 13).

Frank's claim of ignorance may just as well be placed on his shoulders as his church's shoulders. This case could also suggest that the programming offered by Frank's church was ineffective and ultimately detrimental to the lives of his children. It is not always this bad, and it would be unfair to lump every church with programs for youth and children into the same category as Frank's situation. Frank, however, is not an isolated case. According to a FamilyLife survey conducted between 2007 and 2008, more than half of parents in Christian homes in North America never or rarely engage in any family devotional time (Jones 2011, 12). According to a follow up study conducted by the

Center for Christian Family Ministry, only 20% of Christian families had prayed, read Scripture, or engaged in family devotions at least once a week (Jones 2011, 13). With the time, energy, and finances that churches put into their children and youth programs, what is the message a church sends to the parents who are not otherwise being trained in family discipleship?

This confusing message comes mostly in the form of churches failing to acknowledge the need that parents have to be taught how to disciple their children. For the most part, churches have not done an effective job of telling parents that they are to disciple their children, let alone teaching parents how they are to disciple their children in the ways and means found in Scripture. The primary problem with family discipleship, according to Richard Land and Barrett Duke, stems from within the church. They write that a primary reason for the failure to raise up men as disciplers is due to the fact that churches have not taught their families about core family issues like fathering (Land and Duke 1999, 98).

This research addresses the concerns of the church, and sheds light on the effective practices which are successfully reaching the youth through the parents. This research demonstrates what certain churches do to train the parents of their congregation for household family discipleship. This research did not evaluate only those churches which have disbanded their youth ministry or the preceding preschool and children's ministries. This research identified churches that both utilize the functions of the youth minister and other ministries, as well as those churches which have disbanded such ministries. This research has significantly contributed to the precedent literature by bringing solid empirical research to a field filled with conjecture.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this two-phase sequential mixed methods study was to explore the best practices for training parents to pursue household family discipleship among churches identified as having and implementing a family ministry philosophy and approach. This research used quantitative methods to measure the parents' perception and practices, and qualitative methods to explore the best practices of the churches.

Delimitations of the Proposed Research

The research was delimited to those churches espousing a family ministry approach as defined by the literature and the researcher. An expert panel was assembled for the purpose of identifying churches that practice family ministry as defined by the research. This expert panel intentionally included only individuals that would identify their primary theological orientation as evangelical. Therefore, it is highly likely that all the congregations nominated were conservative evangelical by nature. This being the case, the research was delimited to conservative evangelical congregations.

In addition, the Phase 1 research was delimited to parents who are actively involved attendees of those churches. Parents, for the purpose of this study, were defined as married couples (man and woman) who are living in the same residence, and have at least one child under the age of eighteen years and greater than the age of eighteen months living at the same home or residence as the parents.

The researcher in no way sought to minimize certain households, such as single-parent situations and households wherein extended family members are the primary caregivers for children in the home, which do not meet the criteria above. The researcher has the highest regard for single parents who strive to bring their children up

in the fear and admonition of the Lord. It is also recognized that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other extended family members may be the sole providers for children living in their home. The researcher recognizes those who regularly practice household family discipleship with children in these situations. However, for the sake of maintaining a consistent sample in this particular research, these individuals have been excluded and the study delimited to parents as defined above in order to avoid any variances that could have rose from alternative family structures.

Research Questions

1. To what degree, and in what ways, do parents perceive and practice family discipleship as a household parental responsibility?
2. In what ways have churches taught parents their responsibility to disciple their own children?
3. In what ways do churches train and support parents in the congregation to fulfill their role as primary disciplers?
4. In what ways do churches assess the effectiveness of training parents to disciple their children?

Terminology

Family discipleship. The process which takes place when parents guide their child(ren) through regular and intentional practices which focus on knowledge of Scripture, reverence for God, and obedience to Christ. “Discipleship involves developing perspectives and practices that reflect the mind of Christ, as revealed to us in the New Testament...conformity to Jesus Christ is the goal of discipleship; ‘spiritual development’ and ‘Christian formation’ describe progress towards this goal” (Jones 2011, 7).

Family ministry. The process of intentionally and persistently aligning a congregation’s proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and

held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children (adapted from Jones 2009, 40). Put another way, “Family ministry describes *how* a church partners with parents so that the Christian formation of children occurs not only at church but also in the household” (Nelson 2011). This definition stands in contrast to, “communicating to people of all ages, in as many ways as possible, the biblical and practical truths related to family living” (Sell 1995, 137). Mark DeVries describes this second type of family ministry as ambulance or guardrail programs, systems and programs implemented to support families where they are and not necessarily move them towards mature Christianity (DeVries 2001, 151). This is not how this research viewed family ministry. The research considered the former definition and not the latter.

Parents. For the purpose of this research “parents” consisted of a married couple, man and woman, who lived in the same residence. According to Charles Sell, this is the ideal setting into which a child would be born (Sell 1995, 77f). The purpose in striving to delimit “parents” by this definition was for the purpose of maintaining consistency within the sample. Parents who are adoptive parents and otherwise meet the criteria above were included in this research.

Family-based ministry model. The ministry model which adheres to popular programmatic church culture and practices certain common neo-traditional functions such as Sunday school, youth group, and age-segmented small groups. “Family-based churches retain separate, age-segmented ministry structures. ...family based churches intentionally include intergenerational and family-focused events in each ministry” (Shields 2009, 100).

Family-equipping ministry model. The ministry model which allows or

disallows the use of neo-traditional programs such as Sunday school, youth group, or age-segmented small groups all in an effort to raise an awareness and empower parents to practice discipleship in the home and everyday activities. “Family-equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children” (Strother 2009, 144).

Family-integrated ministry model. The ministry model which seeks to eliminate neo-traditional programs which serve as vices in the effort of parent prompted, home-based discipleship. “The [family-integrated] church eliminates age-segregated programs and events. All or nearly all programs and events are multigenerational, with a strong focus on parents’ responsibility to evangelize and to disciple their own children” (Jones 2009, 52).

Procedural Overview

In order to most effectively establish a sample population for this study, an expert panel was assembled. The expert panel was compiled of nine individuals who have a significant voice within the evangelical world as pertains to family ministry. Three individuals on the panel were familiar with the family-integrated ministry model, three were familiar with the family-based ministry model, and three were familiar with the family-equipping ministry model. Upon submission of a list of seventeen churches from the expert panel, twelve churches agreed to participate. All eligible parents from each participating congregation were invited to take part in an online survey (Phase 1). The survey, “The Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey,” was hosted by an online data collection service and included an option to be entered into a drawing for one

of three \$50.00 gift cards. The survey consisted of twenty-five questions and should have taken no more than ten minutes to complete. The questions were designed to identify the parents' perception of their role and responsibility as well as identify which household practices the parents perform on a regular basis. The church's influence in the performance of such practices was also explored. In an effort to capture the perspectives and practices of the parents as well as that of the church leadership, both were examined.

Phase 2 of the study consisted of telephone interviews with all the nominated churches which chose to participate, about the overall ministry approach and the specific plan or process in place to fulfill the family ministry objectives. Since the churches on the list were nominated by the expert panel for their excellence in family ministry, all of the churches were given the opportunity to be interviewed about their family ministry approach and practices. In addition, three churches were selected to participate in individual case studies. These churches were identified through purposive sampling based upon the performance of the parents on the survey instrument. Each survey participant was asked to identify their church name and location, and once the surveys were scored, three of the five churches with the highest mean scores participated in an individual case study.

The case studies included face-to-face interviews with key pastoral staff, collecting data from the church website, requesting copies of the events calendars, staff handbooks, curricula, and notes from business meetings. On-site visits with two of the three churches enhanced the understanding of the daily efforts given to family ministry as well as provided opportunities to evaluate attitude and behavior of the church staff and parents. Further data was collected through additional telephone interviews conducted

with the key leaders in the church and those involved in the regular implementation of the family ministry objectives.

Research Assumptions

1. Parents and churches involved in the study understand Scripture to be the authoritative guide for understanding the role and relationship of those two institutions (family and church) in the discipleship of children.
2. The churches which the expert panel identified were in fact engaged in specific parent training practices that could be observed and explained to the researcher.
3. The parental perception of household discipleship practices and the performance of those practices were measures by which to identify churches which are training parents for their role as disciplers.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the perceived crisis within youth and family ministry, examines some contemporary research that has led others to pursue addressing the same concern as this research, and defines family ministry as it pertains to the research. Further, this chapter explores the biblical and theological foundations for family ministry and presents the current models for family ministry, addressing the need for assessment of these models of family ministry.

The Perceived Crisis of the Church and the Primary Concern of the Home

In 2002, Dennis Rainey, executive director of FamilyLife, wrote, “No church, community, or nation will rise higher than the spiritual condition of its families” (Rainey 2002, 15). Although Rainey’s words may not be grounded in any specific research, the observation, nonetheless, makes a bold statement about the importance of the family in the life of culture and society. A broad range of scholars, theologians, and pastors agree with Rainey’s sentiment. The primary concern for many scholars and church professionals is that families are not discipling their children in the home.

The concern for discipleship in the home is characterized by parents failing to rise to the right, responsibility, and privilege of passing the torch of faithfulness from one generation to the next. Richard Land and Barrett Duke suggest that the concern stems from within the church. Land and Duke present the primary reason for the lack of

discipleship in the home is connected to the churches failure to raise up men as disciplers, and failure to teach their families about core family issues like fathering (Land and Duke 1999, 98). While Land and Duke critique the church, Stephen Barton suggests the concern is a result of the family suffering attack from certain societal trends as the women's movement, science, medicine, and the political movement (Barton 2001, 5-8). Whatever the cause may be, the concern is common across evangelical denominational lines, and even stretches outside of evangelical Christianity into such religions as Mormonism (Smith and Denton 2005).

The church, in response to the cultural and familial trends of society, has instituted such programs as children and youth ministries (Steenburg 2011). Many of these ministries can be found in churches as early as the eighteenth century (Steenburg 2011). Voddie Baucham pointed out in personal conversation that programs such as Sunday school and youth group, which are often deemed "traditional," are, in fact, "neo-traditional." Baucham utilizes this term to suggest that these programs are not as old as the church often considers them to be, but are in fact quite new to the framework of the church. These neo-traditional efforts have too often been focused on the youth, while not giving much consideration to the role and influence of the parents.

Despite the fragmentation of families and the failure of many parents to form their children spiritually, the family remains the "single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents" (Smith and Denton 2005, 261). Jeff Astley further suggests in his book, *The Family in Theological Perspective*, that the family is the central means of faith formation and the passing of tradition (Astley 1996, 199). Astley also addresses the concern over *what* faith and *what* traditions are being

passed from one generation to the next. Astley refers to the church as the wider community and further promotes that this community should be active in the Christian education of the home (Astley 1996, 201). Richard Land and Barrett Duke are not that far removed from what Jeff Astley is asserting when they suggest that the primary problem with family discipleship stems from within the church (Land and Duke 1999, 98).

The concern for the discipleship of the next generation, whether it be by the family or the church, is supported by the apparent apathy of the current generation. Although discipleship cannot effectively be measured simply by church retention rates, the data concerning retention rates sheds a bright light on the contemporary situation. According to a study performed by the Barna Group, only 20% of individuals in their twenties “have maintained a level of spiritual activity consistent with their high school experiences” (The Barna Group, 2006). Another study, performed by Lifeway Research, produced similar results when it concluded that 70% of individuals ages 23 to 30 had stopped attending church regularly for at least a year when they were ages 18 to 22 (Lifeway Research 2007). Although the same research demonstrates that 65% of those dropouts do eventually return to church, only 35% of them claim to attend church at least twice a month (Lifeway Research 2007). That is less than a quarter of the original attendees returning on at least a half time status.

In addition to these studies there has been a general concern raised by evangelical leaders as they consider the high dropout rate from their own congregations. In a report to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, T.C. Pinckney stated that “research indicates that 70% of teens who are involved in a church youth group will stop attending church within two years of their high school graduation”

(Pinckney 2001). Josh McDowell claims that over 69% of youth leave the church after high school (McDowell 2006, 13). George Barna claimed, in 2001, that only 33% of church youth said that church will play a part in their lives when they leave home (Barna 2001, 136). And, unfortunately, even those youth who maintain an identity with the religious congregation in which they were raised, a great majority of them have unarticulated views about the beliefs of that congregation (Smith and Denton 2005, 260).

Although some of this research is questionable and other research is admittedly poor, the majority of the authors in the field of family ministry refer to this type of research when establishing the need for reform within the youth and family ministries of the church. A case could be made that the weakness of this research requires that it be set aside and more energy given to address the true concern of gospel-centered, parental discipleship, but the perceived crisis over drop-out rates brings great attention to the concern for this and the next generation. It is apparent, based on this information alone, that the neo-traditional programs, activities, and operations of the church have not been proving effective for church retention, spiritual formation, or discipleship. With that thought in mind, then, what is proving effective? Are there specific practices that churches are performing which are proving effective in regard to spiritual formation of parents, or training for parent-pursued household discipleship?

Although there are many other factors that may contribute to the failing of families and the lack of parents pursuing household discipleship, the church must consider its own contribution to the present dilemma before looking for any cause elsewhere. What will the contemporary church do in order to grow and develop fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ? How will the church engage the present generation as

well as the generations to come with the call to go and make disciples? How will the paradigm of church change from what was once known? What kind of paradigm does the church need in order to develop faithfulness from generation to generation?

Family Ministry

Many churches have adopted the term family ministry to refer to any variety of programs within the church. Some churches have adopted this term to refer to the counseling services provided by the church. Other churches use this term to describe and include the various programs involving children. This type of church might include pre-school, nursery, children's, and youth programs all under the banner of family ministry while never including any ministry to parents. Just a cursory examination of various church web-sites revealed that for most, the ministry to families exists through departments designed to target specific age or life-style categories. Although no overarching family ministry is identified, every aspect of the family is identified.

It is insufficient to speak of family ministry in a way that segments the family into different categories or in a way that merely strives to communicate "the biblical and practical truths related to family living" (Sell 1995, 137). Family ministry needs to describe "*how* a church partners with parents so that the Christian formation of children occurs not only at church but also in the household" (Nelson 2011). Family ministry, as it pertains to this research, is the process of intentionally and persistently aligning a congregation's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children (adapted from Jones 2009, 40). The researcher believes that this definition best fits the biblical understanding of discipleship for children.

***Family Life Education: A Different
Type of Family Ministry***

As early as the nineteenth century, family-life education programs were established as a response to the changing face of the family (Thomas, Schvaneveldt, and Young 1993). As society changed, so did the roles of the family members (Duncan and Goddard 2005, 3). Popularized in the 1950's and 1960's, family-life ministries took strides to bring healing to hurting families through educationally based counseling methods. These programs quickly became the standard in textbooks and institutions of higher learning. Textbook's such as *Family Ministry*, by Diana Garland, and *Family Ministry: The Enrichment of Family Life Through the Church* by Charles Sell, are examples of contemporary texts which address this form of family ministry. "While not disregarding parents' responsibility to disciple their children, Family-Life Education focused primarily on developing healthy family relationships" (Nelson, Jones 2011).

Beginning in the mid-1950s, churches, schools, and colleges began to develop counseling programs and instructional materials for those families who were in distress, as well as preventative programs for other families to avoid distress (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, and Moss 1993, 3). The term "family life education" was popularized by the formation of many of these programs. The events and programs are typically designed in order to draw families together and to instruct them in how to interact, work, and live together (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, and Moss 1993, 14). Churches readily hired Family Life ministers, and some have even been known to rename their gymnasiums as "Family Life Centers."

**Major Family-Life Educators:
Feucht, Sell, Garland**

Family life education is taught in universities, seminaries, and Christian colleges. Textbooks such as *Helping Families through the Church: A Symposium on Family Life Education*, edited by Oscar Feucht, *Family Ministry: The Enrichment of Family Life through the Church*, by Charles Sell, and *Family Ministry*, by Diana Garland, have all contributed to this field. Family life education may focus on family formation within the church, counseling and support services, or family well being. Under this type of family ministry, some family ministry efforts might involve whole families, the family activities and events, however, tend to function separately from other church ministries (Jones 2010).

Oscar Feucht has been the voice for family life ministry since the 1950's. As the secretary for adult education for the Lutheran synod, Feucht had a significant influence in this particular field. Author of, and contributor to, numerous books, Feucht's "approach provided practical helps for developing programs to educate families for healthier relationships and to equip parents to train their children" (Nelson, Jones 2011).

Charles Sell's approaches are not much different. In his book *Family Ministry*, Sell defines family ministry in this way, "Family ministry involves communicating to people of all ages, in as many ways as possible, the biblical and practical truths related to family living" (Sell 1995, 137). Using this definition and the programs outlined in the chapters of his text, Sell presents family ministry as something that is conducted by the church for the benefit of the church (Sell 1995, 20, 71, 129). He later, however, promotes the church itself as a family-like institution opening the way for his position that the

church and the home are to nurture the children of the church together (Sell 1995, 149-152).

Sell compartmentalizes the ministries of the church in an effort to reach every specific need of the representative families, in an effort to strengthen the church by strengthening the family (Sell 1995, 131). Sell strives to bring attention to the power which the church has to help the family (Sell 1995, 20). Although this effort is commendable and possibly helpful from a therapeutic perspective, this is not the family ministry being addressed by this research. This research seeks to explore family ministry from the perspective of the church “intentionally and persistently realigning a congregation’s proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children” (Jones 2009, 40).

Biblical and Theological Foundations for Household Family Discipleship

The most fundamental expectations for the spiritual development of children are outlined in the Old Testament and extrapolated on throughout the New Testament. Deuteronomy 6:1-9 outlines not only what should be taught to the children of the promise (v. 5, “love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your might”), but also to what extent this teaching should be done (vv. 6-9, “. . . teach them diligently . . . in your house . . . walk by the way . . . lie down . . . rise . . . bind them on your hand . . . frontlets between your eyes . . . write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates”). Proverbs 22:6 recognizes the fallen nature of human beings and gives hope to the outcome of the proper training a child should receive. And Paul, in Ephesians, admonishes fathers to train their children in the fear and instruction of the

Lord in light of the redemptive power of the cross.

It is imperative to begin with the biblical foundations of family discipleship as outlined in Scripture as the basis for family ministry. With Scripture as the guide, this section follows the pattern of *Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation*. Following the biblical metanarrative will help to see the greater picture of the purpose behind family ministry, and the hope that Scripture offers.

Creation: Family Made in the Image of God

An exegetical examination of the first three chapters of Genesis reveals that familial relationships and roles existed before the Fall. This is significant because it demonstrates that God, through His sovereignty, has ordained and sustained the role of men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. Three key verses in the first chapter of Genesis reveal that God established these roles before the Fall. God initiates the establishment of roles when He declares that He is going to make man (אָדָם_{אָדָם} at this point is the generic term for mankind and will later become the proper name for Adam) in His own image (Gen 1:26). One can easily see the roles of Father, Son, and Spirit within the Trinity and if mankind is made in God's image, then the aspect of roles in mankind is certainly possible.

The next verse begins to distinguish mankind into different roles by identifying the two different sexes when it reads that man (אָדָם_{אָדָם} is still generic) is created male and female (Gen 1:27). The significance of being made male and female becomes even more apparent when God says for His creation to be fruitful and multiply and to have dominion over the living creatures (Gen 1:28). For in the reproductive process, male must fulfill his

role and female hers. It is just not possible to multiply by any other natural means. This final verse helps to not only establish the presence of the marital relationship, but even the purpose of the marital relationship. The Lord reminds His people through the prophet Malachi that the purpose of the covenant between male and female is godly offspring (Mal 2:15). Before the Fall of man, God had established that man and woman were to function together in their dominion over the earth and were to be responsible for filling the earth.

The second account of creation reveals more on how these roles and relationships impact society today (Gen 2:4ff). After God had formed every beast of the field and bird of the air, it was determined that none of these creatures would be suitable helpers for Adam (Gen 2:20). According to this account of creation, it was at this point that God created woman out of Adam's rib (Gen 2:21f), and Adam found her to be suitable (Gen 2:23) – granted she was naked (Gen 2:25). The roles of man and woman are established here as God created woman as a helper for man, and not the other way around (Hammett 2007, 355-56).

The question has been asked by scholars, and the debate still rages today, “In what sense was she to be a helper?” John Sailhamer agrees with Augustine when he contends that based upon the blessing that Adam and Eve received in Genesis 1:28 (be fruitful and multiply), Eve was created a helper as it pertains to bearing children (Sailhamer 1990, 46), for this is something Adam could not do on his own. Sailhamer also points out that this position is further supported when one considers the events of the next chapter. Eve's judgment relates specifically to her role in bearing children (Gen 3:16), that she will do so with multiplied pain. Even with the preceding promise of the

offspring (Gen 3:15) there is a wordplay on the woman's role as helper (Sailhamer 1990, 46).

Christians need to appreciate two aspects of the creation story. First, one must consider the magnitude that *imago dei* carries in regard to families. All humans, being the offspring of Adam and Eve, are created in the image of God. This surpasses the roles of just husband and wife, and extends to the children that the husband and wife bear and rear. It is helpful, with this realization in mind, then, to consider that even children are created as image bearers of God. Secondly, as much as men and fathers are addressed to train their children (ex., Eph 6:4; Deut 6:1-9), mothers are called to play a significant helpers role. With the roles in mind, it is no wonder the biblical authors used masculine language; for the man is to lead out in the instruction and the woman to help him in that instruction.

***The Fall of Man: Family Relationships, Roles,
and Responsibilities in Need of a Redeemer***

The Fall brought more than just judgment to the earth and mankind, it also brought a distortion to the way God had originally designed the earth and mankind to exist. Although one finds relief in the story of creation as it pertains to the roles and responsibilities of men and women, the introduction of sin into the world distorted the fulfillment of those roles and responsibilities. When Paul exhorts husbands to love their wives like Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25-33) he did so because as fallen beings men have a propensity to be selfish and not loving towards another. The same could be said for Paul's exhortation for fathers to not exasperate their children (Eph 6:4).

A Father's Faults due to the Fall

As a fallen being, a father may provoke his son or daughter to anger in any number of ways. The experience may come through the harshness of the father, as well as the absence of the father. The role that Paul appears to be addressing in Ephesians 6:4, is an established power role that exists between the father and his children (Lincoln 1990, 406). Paul recognizes the direct and indirect power that fathers have over their children, and for this very reason, emphasizes that fathers should be tender towards their children. In the case of the husband and wife being one flesh (Eph 5:31), this mystery is revealed in the matrimonial covenant; in the case of the father and child, the power of the father over his child exerts an influence which carries a weighty union either positive or negative in nature (Wood 1981, 81).

The idea of a father not usurping his power and authority is especially dynamic for Paul's day, considering that the role of the father in Greco-Roman culture was to have, and even wield, ultimate authority (Wood 1981, 81). In the Greco-Roman world, the father had ultimate power over his children (Tucker 1910, 315). This power of father over his children was so great that even after birth, if the father had any indication that the child was not suitable for life, he had, by Roman law (called *patria potestas*), the right to end the child's life by drowning the infant or to abandon the infant for death (Tucker 1910, 317; see also Eyben 2004, 114-16). The father's power extended into adolescence and even adulthood, giving the father complete power over the offspring's life until the father had passed away. It does not seem evident that just by sheer allowance under the law that many fathers followed through with the law. The opposite would seem more likely.

Children: Which Way Will They Go?

Children should not necessarily be viewed as innocent either. Children are fallen beings, as well. The exhortation for children to obey their parents (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20) does not come without merit. As fallen beings, children, like their fathers, will have a propensity towards disobedience. Proverbs 22:6 suggests that a child trained correctly in life will do well in life, when he or she follows that training. The verse is not an option, but rather it is an imperative: for parents to train their children (Koptak 2003, 517).

Most translations of this verse render this training in a positive sense. This gives the English reader a certain hope, not a promise, that when trained correctly, the child will adhere to the training and live a promising life (Waltke 2005, 204-05). The message of the verse, when analyzed further in the Hebrew, can just as equally render the idea that a child who is allowed to create their own path and live a life that is marked by selfishness and dishonesty will, when they get older, not depart from that lifestyle, either (Stuart 1980, 52). The desire, or natural tendency to live a life in contradiction to Scripture, is a result of the Fall. To avoid the consequence of children living this type of life, parents will need to provide training that demonstrates the difference between right and wrong as early as possible (Garrett 1993, 188).

The opening verses of Proverbs 22 indicate the positive values one should instill in children when training them up (vv. 1, 3, 4, 5). These are values that will not come naturally and are lacking as a result of the Fall. The training should transcend how to put on a garment or how to walk down the street. The training should be something more than just holding the door for a female or washing your hands before dinner. The

training should be the training of the Lord (Prov 22:6). Essentially, the training should be that which is foundational to piety and properly prepares the child for life (Tate 1971, 69). The Israelite children were to know the Law of Moses (Deut 6:6-9), and children of Christian parents are to know the law, as well (Mark 12:28-34).

This instruction will not be a standard form of instruction for every child. Although the content of the lessons, the fear and admonition of the Lord, will not change, the instruction will vary depending on the child and his or her personality and other unique characteristics. For this reason, some have felt inclined to exegete this verse to say “train up a child according to his bent”. The parent must know the child. Is the child stubborn? Is the child a clown? Is the child a leader or a follower? All of these considerations, plus more, will need to be calculated regarding the manner in which the parent instructs the child. This is not to suggest that the parent attempt to change the child’s personality. The parent, however, must understand the child’s personality and instruct the child from such an understanding.

Thwart the Fall through Generational Legacies

When considering the content of instruction proposed in Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4, one need go no further than Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (esp. vv. 4-5). In these verses, the community of Israel receives theological instruction and a structure that should continue throughout their lives (Dumbrell 2002, 59). The need for such instruction is connected to the results of the Fall. Jesus, in the Gospels, repeats the command found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, as the greatest commandment by which all believers are to live, and He follows it with a second command to love our neighbors (Mark 12:29-31; cf. John 13:34-35). For the contemporary Christian, it is imperative also

to include this second command uttered by Jesus in Mark 12:31 as part of the training and instruction of the Lord.

More significantly is the fact that, when it is taught and obeyed, the legacy of the fear of the Lord will pass from generation to generation. It is important to this study to point out that the generations that Moses identifies are specifically the sons (Deut 6:2). It is also significant to notice, although some may find it petty, that the “you” to whom Moses is addressing himself, is masculine in the Hebrew. Moses is specifically calling the men to teach their sons, who will in turn become husbands and fathers, themselves, and teach their own sons. The teaching is such that it should be on their mind when they are at rest or when they are busy (“when you sit . . . when you walk by the way”), it should begin and end each day (“when you lie down and when you rise”), they should think of it as they work with their hands (“bind them as a sign on your hand”), it should be at the forefront of their minds (“frontlets between your eyes”), and it should be considered as they depart and return from their home (“write them on the doorposts . . . and on your gates”). The teaching should be central to the life of the individual and the family (Dumbrell 2002, 59). The symbolic language of Moses in Deuteronomy should be taken more metaphorically than literally, but ultimately, the symbolism should draw attention to the commands of the preceding verses (Kalland 1994, 247). The biblical model of the role of a father can be summarized in two parts: fathers should not take advantage of their position of power and authority, and they should pass on the knowledge of God and His Kingdom to the next generation to seek redemption from the Fall.

The Fall of Father Eli in 1 Samuel 2

One Old Testament account in particular demonstrates the consequences of turning from the instruction of the Lord. The story of Eli the High Priest and his sons, Hophni and Phineas, is a classic account of what can happen when one generation disregards the need to instruct the next generation. Not much is known about the two sons except that they were unruly, to say the least (1 Sam 2:12-17; 22-26). The instruction and discipline of the Lord from Eli to his sons is obviously lacking. In 1 Samuel 2:27-36, Eli is even scorned for his sons' behavior and for his own disregard for the instruction of the Lord in regard to his two sons, but according to Scripture, he takes no measures to amend the situation. Hophni and Phineas' spiritual development was in disrepair as evidenced by their sinful actions in the temple (1 Sam 2:12-17). It was not from the lack of a spiritual figurehead in their lives, it was the lack of the instruction in the fear of the Lord from that spiritual figurehead that caused these two sons to fall away from the love of God and into the vengeance of God.

This biblical account foreshadows the contemporary situation of spiritual development, especially as it pertains to adolescents. In the case of Eli and his sons, a parental figure did not fulfill his role and ignored the direct commands of God and Scripture. In contemporary church settings, similar circumstances may be observed.

Redemption in the Marital Relationship

A major result of the Fall is that the relationship between man and woman was marred. God tells Eve that her desire shall be for her husband (Gen 3:16). In the latter section of Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, he addresses the Christian relationship of marriage (Wood 1981, 75). Although true redemption is achieved through the blood

of Christ spilt on the cross, the Christians efforts in marriage, family, and life should reflect the work done on the cross. To the husband, Paul commands love for his wife just as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25), and then proceeds to describe in detail what the love of Christ looks like (Eph 5:26-27). In describing Christ, Paul follows the verb “love” with three descriptors to clearly demonstrate the lengths Christ went to on the church’s behalf. Paul uses words such as *παρέδωκεν* (handed himself over/self-sacrifice), *ἀγίαση καθάριας* (sanctified and cleansed the church), and *παραστήση . . . ἁγία* (present the church as holy) to describe Christ’s actions of love towards the church.

In verse twenty-eight, after the description of Christ, Paul reiterates that it is in the same manner, with the same love, by which husbands are to love their wives (Lincoln 1990, 378). Quite often in Scripture, the indicatives are the basis for the imperatives (Vogel, 2008). Paul is commanding husbands to love their wives based upon the love they have themselves already received from God the Father through Jesus Christ (Perkins 2000, 451). Christ came to redeem the church. A husband’s Christ-like love for his wife should be a reflection of that redemption.

It is the single verb “love,” which Paul uses to sum up the role and responsibility of the husband. In this case, however, Paul commands a particular type of love, a redemptive love. As opposed to the verb for brotherly love (*φιλέω*) or passionate love (*ἔρωσ*), both of which can easily be identified and performed in the marriage covenant, Paul is very specific to use the word for unconditional, unending love (*ἀγαπάω*) (Wood 1981, 76). It is this same word for love that is used to describe God’s love for us and Christ’s love for the church (John 3:16; Eph 5:25) (Klein 2006, 151). It is

the same word for love that translators understood and ascribed to Moses when describing God's love for the Israelites and the same love that the Israelites were commanded to return to the Lord (Deut 4:27; 6:5, LXX). It is the same love that Jesus demands of the Scribe in answering what is the greatest commandment (Mark 12:30-31). It is with this unconditional love by which husbands are to love their wives.

Paul further explains the idea of unconditional love with an illustration of washing. The imagery of washing can be found in the Old Testament with the practice of the priests washing themselves in the bronze basin that was found in the courtyard of the temple (Exod 30:17-21). The practice of the priests was to wash before going in to the Holy Place in order to cleanse themselves before entering the presence of God (Averbeck 2003, 815).

For the New Testament church, the washing consisted of baptism, with the "word" (Eph 5:26) being those words spoken over an individual before the ordinance of baptism (Abbott 1979, 168). It is important to consider that the purpose of Christ's washing was in order to present the church to Himself as holy and without blemish (Eph 5:27). Paul does not imply nor suggest that it is the outward action of washing through baptism that is the work of purification, but it is only through the inward work of God that one will be sanctified (Pringle 1996, 319). In washing, the husband is not in control of his wife's sanctification, but this does not dismiss the required actions of cherishing and nurturing which husbands are commanded to follow (Eph 5:29). For the husband to emulate the baptism of the Church by Christ, he must strive to wash his wife with the Word and to present her as holy, as well. It is a call by Paul not to neglect one's spouse, but rather to give her the utmost attention. Further still, it is the call to give the wife the

same attention that the husband would give himself (Eph 5:28). The nourishing and cherishing that husbands supply to their own bodies should also be supplied to their wives.

Considering the spiritual realm of this command, the call is for husbands to spiritually nurture and cherish their wives (i.e., beyond ἔρωσ and φιλέω) as a redemptive act. The author of Ephesians is borrowing these “nursery” terms (nurture and cherish) in order to establish the role of husband to wife (Martin 1971, 170). Nursery care, however, is not limited to physical nurturing and cherishing, but also extends to the intellectual growth of the child. Much more than physical care, the call of the husband is to disciple his wife in the truths of Scripture (Perkins 2000, 451). In other passages, we see that the husband is to guide his wife through the questions of Scripture (1 Cor 14:35), and here the husband is called to devote himself (“leave his father and mother,” Gen 2:24) to his wife in that pursuit. It is not a role of self-assertion, but rather it is a role of self-sacrifice (Beare 1953, 721). The action of giving oneself for another is the indication of ultimate devotion.

The biblical model of the role of the husband can be summarized by saying that husbands are to lead their wives in a spiritual walk in the same way that they are spiritually walking (see 1 Cor 14:34-35). Husbands do not do this for themselves; rather, husbands do it for their wives and ultimately for the glory of God. The body does not naturally get clean, but naturally gets dirty. So, too, it is with the spiritual walk. If the Christian does nothing, he or she will naturally get dirty, spiritually. The husband must be intentional in the spiritual growth of his own body and so, too, in the spiritual discipleship of his wife.

It seems appropriate that in Ephesians, Paul addresses the role of husband to wife before he addresses the role of father to children. Bowlby's attachment theory is helpful in demonstrating the significance of a husband's love for and commitment to his wife. In a study performed by Jane Dickie, utilizing Bowlby's attachment theory, Dickie demonstrated that as children develop, they begin to conjure certain images of God based upon the relationship they see in their parents (Granqvist and Dickie 2006, 201). One such image is God as nurturing when the father is nurturing (Granqvist and Dickie 2006, 201). For Paul, and for Christians, this nurturing begins between the husband and the wife and then proceeds to the child.

Redemption in the Parental Relationship

Paul follows his exhortations to husbands in Ephesians 5 with an exhortation for children to obey their parents in the opening verses of Ephesians 6. Paul concludes Ephesians 6:4 with a direct command to fathers. The command is two-fold, consisting of a negative and a positive admonition (Martin 1971, 171). Paul tells the fathers one thing they are not to do as well as one thing they are to do. He first urges fathers to avoid provoking their children to anger, and, instead, commands them to strive in instructing their children in the school of the Lord, which is the Christian life (Martin 1971, 171). The effort towards the latter should ultimately negate the former (Pringle 1996, 329).

Paul is more concerned with the positive responsibility for instruction than he is with the negative aspects of discipline (Perkins 2000, 453). The positive to which Paul urges fathers is comparable to the role of husbands in regard to their wives. Paul urges fathers, first, to bring their children up—to train them. The word used in Ephesians 6:4 by Paul, ἐκτρέφω (translated “bring up”), to refer to children, is the same Greek word he

uses in Ephesians 5:29 for “nourishes,” when referring to wives. Just as the call of a husband is to “nourish” his wife like his own body, the call of a father is to “nourish” his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Klein 2006, 157). The Greek word, παιδεία (translated “discipline” by ESV and others), often has a negative connotation in the English language. However, the word can also be translated “training” (e.g., see HCSB, NASB, NIV, NKJV), which carries the nourishing idea past the provocation to anger, which “discipline” in the English language may represent.

It is the ultimate duty of a father to raise and rear his children alongside of his wife. It is one of the basic elements of the role of father. Fathers have an enormous power over their children, not only in the negative, as Paul initially discussed in Ephesians 6:4, but also in the positive, that he discussed at the end of verse four. Fathers are to bring up their children in discipline and instruction (Eph 6:4b). Fathers are to teach their children (Deut 6:7). Fathers are to guide their children (Prov 22:6). Fathers are to protect their children (Eph 6:4a). Fathers are to provide for their children (1 Tim 5:8). As Christians, fathers are called to do all of this in the knowledge and instruction of the Lord (Deut 6:20-25). The discipline and instruction by which the father nourishes his children should be that of the Christian life (Martin 1971, 171). It is not good enough to teach the children the world’s standards, to guide them in the way of the world, or simply to provide for them materially— a father’s “counsel must be truly Christian, the kind the Lord, Himself, provides” (Klein 2006, 157). This is the fulfillment of the role of a man in regard to fatherhood—that fathers might teach their children all they can of the greatness and power of God the Father.

Other principles for parents to follow in leading and guiding in the home may

be gleaned from the Titus 1 qualifications for elders. Godly parents will need to be above reproach, not arrogant or quick tempered, and not violent or greedy, but should be hospitable, self-controlled, holy, and disciplined. Paul commands children to obey their parents in the Lord (Eph 6:4), a prerequisite, then, is that the parents themselves must be in the Lord.

Parents as Co-laborers in Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians

Although an extra-biblical author, Polycarp is considered one of the most notable figures in the post-apostolic church (Holmes 1999, 202). Polycarp served as the bishop of Smyrna during the first century and eventually died a martyr's death. Because of his notability and presence in the first century, his letter can serve as a positive measurement of what life and livelihood would have looked like for the first century church. In his letter to the Philippians he addressed the role of women and the instruction of children. It should be noted that in his letter he addressed the husbands to "instruct [their] wives to continue in the faith delivered to them and in love and purity, cherishing their own husbands in all fidelity and loving all others equally in all chastity, and *to instruct the children with instruction that leads to the fear of God*" (Holmes 1999, 211 italics added).

Polycarp's exhortation to the Philippians is reminiscent of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians. By considering the female role of helper from Genesis and examining Polycarp's letter, contemporary readers of Scripture can learn that as much as the command in Ephesians is to the father, the mother was just as involved in the instruction of children in the home of the first century church.

Parent and Child: Brother and Sister in Christ

It is a staggering thought that children are more than just offspring. Although parents have been entrusted with the fruit of their wombs, a day will come when these children may actually be brothers and sisters to their parents. As potential believers in Christ, each child has the possibility of one day standing before the throne of God, side-by-side their earthly parents, as equals in the kingdom of God. When seen in this light, parents should take a different view and approach to the rearing and instruction in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Jones 2011).

Consummation: The Coming of Christ and the Christian Home

The end of this story is the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ will see all believers fully sanctified and free from the strains of this world. The first coming of Christ was not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill the Law (Matt 5:17). The Law of Moses came about from sin entering the world. Although much time passed between the Fall and the climb up Mt. Sinai, all were under the confines of the Law. The Law of Moses is grounded in teaching the fear of the Lord. It was Moses' primary objective to instill the fear of the Lord in the children of Israel (Christensen 2001, 135). In contemporary western society, the fear of the Lord is slowly slipping away as children begin to see God as only loving and not punitive (Granqvist and Dickie 2006, 203). As parents have shifted their discipline style to make allowances for children to do as they please, this misguided love-oriented style of parenting has removed the reverential fear concept from the relationship and attempts to write a different ending.

The centrality of the command found in Deuteronomy 6:5, for the Israelites to

love God, becomes the focus from this point forward in the history of Israel as well as Christendom (Clements 1998, 343; Mark 12:30). For the believer, the most foundational requirement is to love God, “and this love is to be the dynamic principle for [the believer’s] life” (Archer 1994, 273). The significance for the contemporary Christian is that it is from these same verses in Deuteronomy that Jesus gleaned the greatest commandment in Mark 12:28-31 and Matthew 22:34-40 by which Christians are called to live (Craigie 1976, 168).

Moses is not commanded by God to merely publish these laws, but rather he is commanded to teach the Israelites to do them (Biddle 2003, 124). The more imminent significance for our current study is that the command was not just for the Israelites to live out the law themselves (Deut 6:1-6), but for the Israelites to teach these commands to their children and their children’s children (Deut 6:2, 7), for the sake of the promise. New Testament Christians have the promise of consummation. The story is not over, and no one has arrived. With that sobering thought in mind, Christian parents should be focused on the eternity to come, and striving all the way to get there.

Working Towards Consummation: In the meantime

When reading and exegeting passages such as Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:1-9, and Proverbs 22:6 the believer can see and learn that he or she is not left to him or herself. The individual’s father and mother are not only important, but are also vital to the development of the spirituality and religiosity of the child and adolescent. And what about the child or adolescent convert who does not have Christian parents or parents acting as Christians? As Paul commands Titus to find men worthy to teach and older women to train the younger women (Titus 1:5-9; 2:1-5), so the contemporary church

should rise up and adhere to the same biblical command in regard to the spiritual development of the children and adolescents—but not in place of the parents and the home.

No amount of teaching or instruction can transcend the grace poured out by Jesus on the cross. And no effort on the part of a Christian can fully experience the sanctifying work of Jesus Christ on this side of heaven. And until that day comes, when Christ shall descend and rule with the Father, Christians are called to work towards redemption. As parents we are to train and instruct our children. As followers of Christ we are called to make disciples. Is there a difference?

Four Foundational Truths for Discipleship

Although Christians often seek out biblical examples to guide their life and decisions, Christians would be better suited to seek out the biblical precepts. As a Christian considers the metanarrative of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation, what principles are discovered through Scripture that serve as the basis for Christian efforts? As it concerns the training and instruction of the Lord, what principles can be gleaned from Scripture to guide the Christian in the pursuit of household family discipleship?

A close examination of the New Testament will reveal specific biblical truths written for the sake of our redemption. Some of these truths are written specifically to parents, while other redemptive passages are written to instruct us in our basic roles as male and female. Rob Plummer, author of “Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord: Family discipleship among the first Christians” points out four redemptive qualities a man must have in order to lead his home in the fear and instruction

of the Lord (Plummer 2011). The first, “he must manage his household well,” indicates that a man must first have positive oversight to the whole of his household (1 Tim 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6). This household oversight includes the nourishment of his wife, as demonstrated above, and a nourishment of self. The second redemptive quality, “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” is a direct command to fathers to teach their children the Christian life (Eph 6:4). The next redemptive quality, “do not provoke your children to anger,” indicates that a father will need to be intentional with his children as he recognizes the power he holds over his children (Col 3:21; Eph 6:4). Finally, “children, obey your parents,” is call for obedience that must be modeled by the parent who is “in the Lord” (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20).

A Christian’s pursuit to be biblical must go beyond good intentions. Too often, a Christian’s good intentions do not end up being God’s intentions. For the most part, youth ministers and family ministers across the country all have good intentions, but are they God’s intentions?

Overview of Perceived Crisis and Situation

The primary concern of fragmented families disengaging spiritually with their children is overshadowed by the perceived crisis of large numbers of high school graduates disengaging from church. It is this perceived crisis which has led many recent writers to develop, plan, and implement different ways of performing youth ministry. Unfortunately, the data on drop-out rates is inconclusive and the research is even weak at times. What the current research suggests, however, is that the greater crisis is parental disengagement from children in the area of biblical discipleship. Coupled with this reality rises the concern over what churches are doing to stand along side the parents, training

them for the task of household family discipleship. Although the responsibility to disciple the children falls to the parents, in what ways are churches assisting parents with this task? Out of the crisis of parental disengagement have risen three distinct models of family ministry which are becoming widely accepted by various denominations as the means to which address the concern. Not so much the concern over drop-out rates, but the concern over parental training for the task of parent pursued, household family discipleship.

Four Contemporary Models of Family Ministry

The church has already begun to respond to the primary concern of parental disengagement and delinquency in regard to parents pursuing household family discipleship. The term *family ministry* has become popular as churches scurry to discover what they should be doing to assist the families of the congregation. The development of the term and concept of *family ministry* was not in response to any one scholar or situation, but in response to the primary concern at large. The church is aware of the need to shift the paradigm and develop programs and opportunities which place more emphasis on the family. Not all of these paradigms look the same, however.

Although all the models embrace the concept of family ministry as defined for this research, they each have variances when it comes to implementation, focus of attention, and implied roles of responsibility in discipleship. Some churches simply call their efforts family ministry, while other churches have adopted a specific model that shares a common perspective and foundational tenets. Four specific models of family ministry have attracted the most attention in the evangelical community: intergenerational ministry model, family-integrated ministry model, family-based ministry model, and

family-equipping ministry model. Each of these approaches, in its own way, strives to answer the historical question, “What do we do with the youth?” Family ministry, by any of these names, is a movement to realign the contemporary church to the greater scheme of Scripture by exposing and frustrating the neo-traditional mentality of how to “do” church and an attempt to bring reform to the Christian home.

***Intergenerational Ministry Model: Purposively
Bringing the Generations Together***

The concept of intergenerational ministry is one which many churches have attempted under the guise of assorted activities and programs. It is not completely foreign to church leaders, but it is a concept that has not received much wide-spread attention, until recently. Mary Duckert, a noted church educator, admits that intergenerational ministry can take many forms (Duckert 1976, 7). According to Duckert, the various forms of intergenerational ministry can range from a specific series of workshops or sermons to a simplistic meeting of families at diverse seasons of life (Duckert 1976, 7). Intergenerational ministry “may be an event, a prescribed number of events, or an ongoing part of an educational system” (Duckert 1976, 7). By nature, intergenerational ministry will include multiple generations; this can be two, three, four generations or more. For most churches that adopt the intergenerational ministry method, the hope most likely is to create an ongoing system between the generations of the church where positive and cultivating interactions take place. According to James White, the church is the institution to bring the generations together (White 1988, 11).

Of the four church movements considered here, the intergenerational ministry movement is probably the least innovative of all. Although literature is limited, and no distinct model has been established, the foundations of intermingling the generations

have inculcated congregations for a number of decades. Stuart Briscoe, former senior pastor of Elmbrook Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin initiated an intergenerational ministry shortly after assuming his role as Senior Pastor (Zahn 2002, 37). In addition to Briscoe's church, numerous other churches have either independently or cooperatively established a ministry focus which attempts to bring the generations within the church together, rather than pushing them apart. Stephen Ong, pastor of Reformation Baptist Church notes that "too many families were living Christianity only at church . . . I figured if we could bring families together in their walk of faith on Sundays, it would create mutual accountability that would stay with them throughout the week" (Zahn 2002, 38).

The church events can include such times as fathers and sons attending activities together, or involving the youth in volunteer work that directly contributes to the needs of a different generation (ex. senior adults, pre-schoolers). The goal in all of the events and planning is not to become a program driven church that focuses on programs for the families, but rather to become a generations focused church that focuses on the individual generations.

Ben Freudenburg, author of *The Family Friendly Church*, insists that the transition to intergenerational focused ministry must be gradual as most congregations will be "swimming upstream" (Freudenburg and Lawrence 1998, 138). Drew Zahn, assistant editor of the journal *Leadership*, notes that intergenerational churches start in only one of two ways: either from the ground up, or else very slowly (Zahn 2002, 39). Within the intergenerational movement, Ben Freudenburg notes that there needs to be room for both the age-specific ministries and the age-integrated ministries (Freudenburg and Lawrence 1998, 102). The former is intended to teach the stories and concepts of the

faith, while that latter is intended to “incorporate those truths into relationships” (Zahn 2002, 39).

Don Baron, pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Honolulu, Hawaii, emphasizes the focus on relationships by integrating the generations in weekly small groups, what his, and other churches sometimes call “cell” groups (Baron). In describing the idea of the cell group, Baron notes that just like in biology, the cell is a unit of life. However, in the church cell group, the life that was often missing was the life of the child (Baron). After noticing that many of his parishioners were seeking out childcare for cell group night or simply not attending at all for lack of childcare, Baron initiated an intergenerational cell group where the children now look forward to the events of the night and are involved in the cell group.

Another way to view the intergenerational ministry method would be to avoid the term “family” altogether, and, instead, use the term “households.” Within every church there are bound to be “families” that do not have a father or a mother (or at least a father or mother active in the church). In addition, there will be singles who would not consider themselves a family. Some churches will have neighborhood children arrive by themselves, or as the guests of other church members. Some families will be incomplete due to divorce, and others due to death. For these reasons the intergenerational ministry method seeks to redefine family to include all households (i.e., a home, no matter who lives there) (Zahn 2002, 38).

Although numerous churches and denominations have adopted the intergenerational ministry method, there is not a single means by which to follow, or conduct, an intergenerational church. Various institutions have begun to emphasize the

need for intergenerational integration. Fuller Theological Seminary has initiated an effort to bring more attention to the intergenerational ministry method with awareness through its Fuller Youth Institute (Fraze 2008). Hesston College in Hesston, Kansas, has brought attention to the need by identifying intergenerational ministry and better Bible teaching as the top two concerns for the Mennonite youth of today (Hershberger 2007). In addition, Calvin College's, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, sponsored an event called "The Intergenerational Ministry Conference" where an awareness of the need for intergenerational ministry was raised as the focal point of the conference (Verhulst 2009).

Although many churches utilize intergenerational methods, and certain institutions strive to bring awareness to the need for intergenerational ministry, the intergenerational ministry method is not sufficiently distinct as a model at this time. For this reason the intergenerational ministry method will be excluded from the research and the following three models will be considered for the proposed research.

***Family-Integrated Church Model: Preserving
the Family through Desegmentation***

The family-integrated church model is most often associated with the family-integrated church. The family-integrated church is quite different when compared to what most people consider characteristic of church attendance. Most people, when they think of church, quickly associate Sunday school attendance with church. Others just as readily think of youth group as part of the church's functions. This is how most people, in today's culture, grew up in church—by attending such functions. The family-integrated church, however, has eliminated both of these. A family-integrated church will not have a Sunday school hour, nor will they have a youth minister, and they will not have youth group.

The family-integrated church strives to put the family at the forefront of the discipleship and worship process by eliminating any typical church programs and functions which would compromise the discipleship and worship efforts of the parents. Programs and functions such as Sunday school or youth group, which would easily be associated with the church, are being replaced with similar functions within the home. In his book, *Uniting Church and Home*, Eric Wallace suggests such integrating practices as establishing family Sunday school lessons and Wednesday night family worship (Wallace 2003, 231, 233).

In the family-integrated ministry model, although not directly tied to a denomination or greater church body, a select number of organizations and associations have identified themselves as leaders in the movement, offering resources, as well as encouragement through biblical teaching, to promote the efforts of a family-integrated church. Among these are the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches (NCFIC) with Scott Brown as director, the Alliance for Church and Family Reformation (ACFR) with Paul Renfro as the director of operations, and Vision Forum Ministries (VFM) which serves the families of family-integrated churches, with Doug Phillips as president.

It is clear that NCFIC stands opposed to the structure and practices of the contemporary church. They do not consider themselves a denomination, nor to have the only solution to what they refer to as “the culture-driven, age-segregated, peer-dominated [contemporary] church” (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009a). Some of the missional statements of the NCFIC are to “identify the marks of worldliness in church and family in the 21st century,” “communicate the biblical doctrine of the family,” and “restore the biblical pattern of age integrated, family integrated worship,

discipleship and evangelism” (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009b). Article seven of the confessions of NCFIC reads, “We deny/reject the modern trend embraced by many churches to undermine the purpose and government of both family and church, by substituting family-fragmenting, age-segregated, peer-oriented, youth driven, and special-interest programs, which may prevent rather than promote family unity, church unity, and inter-generational relationships” (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009c).

The ACFR was established by Paul Renfro while he was an elder at Grace Family Baptist church in Spring, Texas. Another notable elder from Grace Family Baptist church is former ACFR chairman, Voddie Baucham, Jr. According to its website, the ACFR exists to educate, facilitate, and proliferate the family-integrated churches (Alliance for Church and Family Reformation 2011). The ACFR strives to educate the broader body of Christ in the efforts of the family-integrated church movement, facilitate family worship, catechism, and family discipleship, and proliferate the family-integrated church movement through partnership, training, and connecting pastors and the like-minded (Alliance for Church and Family Reformation 2011). The ACFR also offers consultation, conferences, and campus visits to better educate and train pastors and ministry leaders in the family-integrated church model.

Because of the emphasis on the removal of age segregated instructional entities, it is quite common to find a large percentage of the members of a family-integrated church who home school their children. Vision Forum was established as a ministry to aid and assist in the development and production of home schooling materials for the families of the family-integrated churches, as well as other family focused

products that emphasize positive character traits through history and character sketches. The founder, Doug Phillips, is a prominent proponent of the family-integrated church model and is an elder at Boerne Christian Assembly in San Antonio, Texas, which is a prominent family-integrated church. Doug Phillips, in addition to serving on the board, is the founder of the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches (The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches 2009d).

These three organizations make up the majority of the family-integrated church movement as it exists today. The three organizations share the common perspective that Scripture is inerrant. The three organizations agree that the home is the fountainhead of family discipleship. The three also share a strong bent towards the belief in home-schooling being the best option considering the commands of Scripture as well as the state of public education. In addition to the three men who head and direct these organizations, Voddie Baucham, Jr. is a prominent spokesperson for the family-integrated churches.

Voddie Baucham: *Family-Driven Faith*

Voddie Baucham's position is two-fold. He is first quick to point out that Christian parents fail their children spiritually if Christian parents fail to train their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Baucham 2007, 27, 89). Secondly, he points out that the contemporary church, through its programs and methodologies has failed the families (Baucham 2007, 174-83). Baucham is in pursuit of what he refers to as multigenerational faithfulness (Baucham 2007, 16). The concept of multigenerational faithfulness infers that Baucham is not done when his children are married and out of the house. This is a concept which means Baucham is investing himself in the lives of his

children for the sake of his children's children.

Baucham contends that his efforts toward this end are for proper training and instruction. For Baucham, this training and instruction consist of, and are exhibited through, a proper biblical worldview (Baucham 2007, 69). For Baucham there is one main opponent to a proper biblical worldview, and that is Secular Humanism (Baucham 2007, 77). Secular Humanism, according to Baucham, is the driving force in our culture today which has begun to, if it has not, already, replace Christian Theism even in the minds of some believers (Baucham 2007, 77). The call, then, is to develop a biblical worldview in the minds of the children of Christians. The question, then, is whose call is this? Is this the call of the church? Is this the call of the pastor? Is this the call of the parents? According to Baucham, and he points to Deuteronomy 6:7 for support, this is the call of the parents (Baucham 2007, 89).

Although public education has played a major role in the continued pull away from Christian Theism, Baucham also finds fault with the methodologies of the church. In accordance with Christian Smith, Baucham recognizes that too many Christians have consciously or unconsciously (due to cultural norms) deferred the instruction of the Bible to the church and the professionals and ministers within the church (Baucham 2007, 90). The startling evidence that the National Study of Youth and Religion provides, is that the professionals and ministers will not have as great an impact, if the rest of the adolescent's faith formation is lacking (Smith and Denton 2005, 269-70). This is not to suggest that the church does not play *a* role, but it is to suggest that church does not play the *primary* role.

Baucham contends that the adolescent's faith formation is not a function of the

church, nor is it the responsibility of the youth minister or Sunday school teacher.

Baucham argues that the faith formation of the adolescent is the responsibility of the family, specifically the parents (Baucham 2007, 89). The crisis in adolescent spiritual development, then, will continue in the contemporary culture until parents rise to the calling they have been entrusted with, through the proper understanding of Scripture.

The irony that Baucham's position presents, is that it has been the church attempting to fill a void left by the parents, which has now propelled the parents to widen the void.

In his book *Family Driven Faith*, Baucham contends for the role of fathers and husbands in the home. He presents a clear, concise, scripturally based argument that identifies not only the present condition of the church and the need for a paradigm shift, but also a means for achieving that paradigm shift. He notes, in his book, that family driven faith "is more than just being a better parent" (Baucham 2007, 169). For Baucham, it is a complete lifestyle overhaul that will put the church in a position to aid families, rather than hinder them (Baucham 2007, 169). He identifies four distinctives and four guiding principles of the family-integrated church. The distinctives are that families worship together, there is no systematic segregation, evangelism and discipleship exists and is practiced in, and through, the homes, and there is an emphasis on education as a key component of discipleship. The guiding principles are to promote a biblical view of marriage and family, promote family worship and discipleship, promote Christian education, and promote biblically qualified leadership. At first glance, any Christian would struggle to challenge either of these lists.

When Baucham and the family-integrated church movement suggests that families worship together, they are not simply referring to the teenager sitting next to his

or her parents, but even includes the presence of infants in the sanctuary (Baucham 2007, 193). The presence of family units is not isolated to the sanctuary. Through the distinctive of eliminating systematic age segregation, family-integrated churches have incorporated families into every function and activity of the church. It is not just occasional participation, nor is it additional programming, rather it is complete integration. The third distinctive, evangelism and discipleship in and through the home, calls for the removal of the youth minister and the accession of the father to the role of discipler of his own children. The call for reform in education not only stresses the need for discipleship to take all forms and consume the child, but is also a reaction against the present state of education in our country (Baucham 2007, 193-201).

The principles which Baucham outlines are not principles which he expects, nor even desires churches to adopt, adapt, and overcome overnight (Baucham 2007, 201-02). The four principles are a call to initiate a paradigm shift, which will transform the church and the family. The principles are intended to be guides for the pastor seeking ways to shift the paradigm in his own church. It should be noted on the third principle, promote Christian education, that Baucham's call is not for every family to withdraw from the school building and take refuge under their own roof. It is a call for pastors and church leaders to bring to the attention of their flocks the current state of public education and promote the healthiest option available (Baucham 2007, 207).

Due to the absence of a doctrinal statement of the family-integrated church, which clearly outlines and defines in detail the elements of the church, one is forced to rely on the characteristics of the three explained organizations and the broader explanation by Voddie Baucham. Some of those involved in the movement may take

case against some of the positions Baucham purports, either finding them to be too liberal, or even too conservative, for the manner in which they conduct family-integrated church. It does seem, however, that the distinctives and principles presented by Baucham are representative of the family-integrated church as a general whole.

***Family-Equipping Ministry Model:
Parents as Co-Champions***

The term *family-equipping* ministry will likely be foreign to most. It is a term coined by Timothy Paul Jones, Associate Professor of Discipleship and Family Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky (Jones et al. 2009, 51). This model is distinct from family-integrated in that it seeks to maintain the offices of youth pastor and children's minister, while championing and equipping the parents. The objective of the model is to realign the focus of the church. Instead of eliminating the offices and programs of the church (like the family-integrated church model would propose), or seeking ways in which to merely intermingle the generations represented in the church (like the intergenerational church), the family-equipping model seeks to redirect the attention of the church to the parents while utilizing the existing programs and incorporating multiple generations. It is a church wide effort to plan every ministry to champion the parents as the primary discipled of their children (Jones et al. 2009, 51).

To understand the need for both the church and the family, Jones has developed an image of a running river with a bank on each side. Inside the river are rocks jutting out here and there, with the running water to represent the growth and development of the child and adolescent. The banks of the river are in place to guide the river in the way that it should go. One of the banks represents the church, while the other represents the parents (Jones et al. 2009, 52). Both banks are necessary for the river to

run its course. If one of the banks were removed, or faltered in any way, then the river would not be running anymore. Rather, it would turn into a stagnant pond.

Quite often, the argument against the positions of youth pastor and age-segregated programs comes in the form that they are sub-biblical. Although some equate this notion of being sub-biblical with being sinful, that is not always the case. Most scholars, like Voddie Baucham, would contend that something is only sub-biblical when it is not found in the Bible, and not necessarily sinful. Baucham uses the example of a microphone, pulpit and even a church building, as we know it, to be things missing from the book of Acts, and thereby, sub-biblical (Baucham 2007, 179). Baucham's concern, as well as the concern of the family-equipping model, is when the office and function of the youth minister has replaced the role of the parents in the discipling of the children. This sub-biblical structure (age-segregated programs) only becomes sinful when it does not take strides to champion the parents in the eyes of the child and train the parents for their roles as disciplers.

In support of the family-equipping model, Steve Wright offers suggestions to churches on how the church might champion the parents and realign its efforts to support the parents in their biblical mandate (Wright and Graves 2007, 75). One way in which Wright's church, Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, achieves this is through their Parent Leadership Teams (Wright and Graves 2007, 175). This model allows the parents to be involved with the ministry at the church, as well as find platforms on which they can continue the discipleship process at home. This model not only allows the parents to fulfill their discipleship role in the home, but also provides training through the church to be more prepared to do so. Borrowing from Jones'

riverbank illustration (Jones et al. 2009, 52), the two riverbanks are working in tandem to promote healthy youth discipleship, while placing the parents in the primary role.

To borrow another illustration, Jones suggests that when the church is properly performing family-equipping ministry, it will be doing one of three things. The church will either be training the parents for household family discipleship, involving the parents in the pursuit of household family discipleship, or equipping the parents to pursue household family discipleship. Jones refers to this as the *TIE* strategy (Train, Involve, Equip). The strategy may be illustrated as follows:

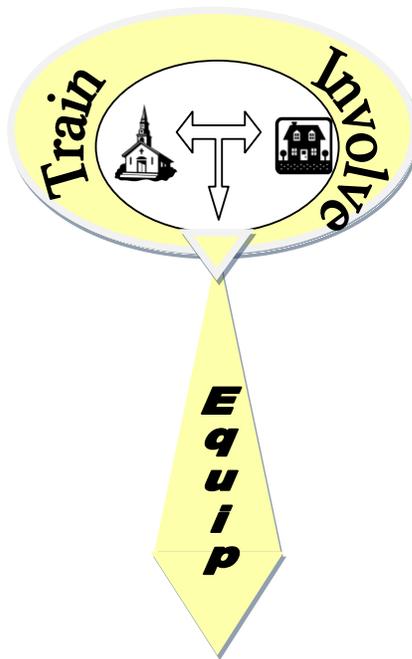


Figure 1: Train, involve, equip strategy

Randy Stinson, Dean of the School of Church Ministries at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Jones developed the model as a means of utilizing the

church's ministries, while emphasizing the parents' responsibilities (Jones et al. 2009, 51). This model in every way seeks to raise up the parents and train them to be the disciplers that they are called to be. Steve Wright espoused such a model in his book *ReThink* (Wright and Graves 2007).

Steve Wright: *ReThink*

Steve Wright, Pastor of Student Ministries at Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, and author of *ReThink*, recognizes the need for parents in the discipling process of youth. At the same time, he recognizes the power the church has in being a part of the process, as the church ministers to families. Wright bases the majority of his position on the biblical mandate that parents are to be the primary disciplers in the lives of their children (Wright and Graves 2007, 145-48). Moreover, from the world's standards, Wright demonstrates that the parents have the primary influence in the adolescent's life (Wright and Graves 2007, 81-83).

Wright's conclusions present an interesting concept: the parents not only have the ability to influence their children, but should also be doing all they can to influence their children. Wright proceeds to present a model of church ministry which incorporates the two ideas of biblical mandate and primary influencer. In addition to demonstrating the responsibility of parents, Wright also presents the church as a vital organism in the life of the process (Wright and Graves 2007, 94). As opposed to the dilemma of the church wielding the reigns of youth discipleship (Wright and Graves 2007, 142), Wright presents the case for yielding the reigns of youth discipleship to the parents (Wright and Graves 2007, 75-76).

Wright appears to be in conformity with Christian Smith's conclusion that the

parents are the primary influencers in the lives of the youth (Smith and Denton 2005, 261), and now just wants the parents to seriously function as influencers. Instead of eliminating the youth minister position and age segregated Sunday school classes, Wright sees a need to develop these entities for the purpose of championing the parents, and equipping them as necessary (Wright and Graves 2007, 75, 87, 105). Amidst other reasons, Wright identifies the amount of time the parents spend with their children, as well as the ultimate influence the parents will have over their children in comparison to a youth worker, as reasons why parents will have a greater opportunity to disciple than anyone else (Wright and Graves 2007, 151, 153).

Wright suggests that the church is a vital instrument in achieving what Baucham strives to accomplish without the church. Wright suggests that just as much as the parents are the primary disciplers of their children (Wright and Graves 2007, 145), the church is an important part of God's plan to facilitate that discipleship (Wright and Graves 2007, 94-95, 105). As a part of that conclusion, Wright presents a case for, and examples of, how the church might partner with parents in order to best see the fruitfulness of the discipleship process as the parents assume their biblical responsibility.

Quite often scholars will defer to Deuteronomy 6 when considering and arguing for the role of parents in the discipleship of the children. One factor that must be considered, and reinforced, when contemplating the family-equipping model, is that Moses, who was not the father of every Israelite, was equipping the Israelites to disciple their families. He was, in essence, the church (i.e., voice of God) communicating what they must do for multi-generational faithfulness. The church is in a position to equip and train parents, just as Moses trained the Israelite parents.

***Family-Based Church Ministry Model:
Programs in Place to Organize the Parents***

After realizing that all of the youth activities he was doing was harmful to his ministry, Mark DeVries decided to eliminate some of the weekly activities at his church in Nashville, Tennessee (DeVries 2004, 99-100). Although this was not a welcome change at first, by keeping some of the core activities in place DeVries was able to mobilize parents better. The underlying foundation to family-based youth ministry is two-fold. The first part of the foundation is to train the parents of the congregation. In the words of DeVries, this is priority number one (DeVries 2004, 103). Without the statistical data that Smith and Denton provide, DeVries draws the same conclusion that the National Study of Youth and Religion demonstrates: children and youth are heavily influenced by their parents (DeVries 2004, 104). With this understanding, DeVries makes training the parents one of the foundational pieces of his family-based ministry model.

The second component of the foundation for DeVries is the need to train the extended family of the church. DeVries sees the church community as integral in the process of faith formation. DeVries speaks out against families that cluster in their own home making every attempt to avoid the influences of others (DeVries 2004, 104). DeVries seeks to make the greater faith community the family, and reminds us that our first loyalty should be to God, and not family (DeVries 2004, 105).

Brandon Shields is another proponent to the family-based model of ministry. He suggests that family-based is not so much a model as it is a philosophy (Shields 2009, 98). The ministry model itself resembles the age-segregated model of ministry that most are familiar with, but with greater flexibility (Shields 2009, 98). According to Shields, age-segregation is not the problem (Shields 2009, 100). Shields would agree with Jim

Burns and Mark DeVries that the problem is in the mind-set of the parents and the church, not in the programs themselves. Jim Burns and Mark DeVries, in their book *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry*, suggest that what is needed is a fresh mindset because parents and family are crucial to faith development (Burns and DeVries 2003, 7).

With this fresh mindset purpose, Shields suggests that parents and churches move away from three potentially harmful types of age-segregated youth ministry. The first, “activity-driven ministry” seeks to keep the youth busy with activities and excursions mostly for the sake of entertainment. The second, “uni-generational ministry” seeks to avoid the youth leading or discipling the youth. Avoiding this type of youth ministry will mean realizing that older individuals can and should be a part of the ministry to the youth. The danger lies in when churches conclude that the only individual who can reach the youth generation is another very young individual who is “hip” (Shields 2009, 109). The third and final type of ministry that Shields warns against is the culturally immersed ministry. Shields’ warning is to avoid the need to accommodate culture when cultural relevance is truly what is being sought (Shields 2009, 110).

Where the Models Converge and Diverge

It becomes clear that each of these models, although unique in nature, have some common underlying themes and beliefs. To begin with, each of the individuals who are leaders within these ministry models hold to the supremacy of Scripture. The models are not defined nor structured on cultural standards seeking to raise children of the world, but rather children of the Bible. Based on that premise, each model, in obedience to Scripture, places the primary responsibility for the faith development of the family on the shoulders of the parents. This standard is derived from the proper

understanding of Deuteronomy 6 and the implications of the correlating New Testament passages found in Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21. The main point of divergence is in considering what role the church plays, and how the church fulfills its role.

***The Influence of the Church and Culture
on the Home and Family***

Wright, Smith, Baucham, and DeVries agree that there is, in our culture, a misguiding of priorities. Smith and Baucham identify the genres of sports, entertainment, and romance, as often interfering with, and taking precedence over, the role of religion in the home (Smith and Denton 2005, 161; Baucham 2007, 36). By default, the adolescent's search for spirituality is too often fulfilled in the one area that consumes the most time out of their daily lives. With this realization, Smith appears surprised that there are as many religious youth as there are today. He further emphasizes, in contrast to Baucham, that the church has failed the youth more than the parents. He does not conclude that every church has failed, but strictly those churches that do not prioritize ministry to youth and invest in trained and skilled youth leaders (Smith and Denton 2005, 261).

Baucham would conclude that it is this mindset of the church that does not drive the family closer to the biblical model of adolescent spiritual development, but rather drives it further away (Baucham 2007, 169). For Baucham, in order to achieve his goal of multigenerational faithfulness there must be a paradigm shift in the way Christians conduct church that will not only remove the apparent need for a youth minister, but also replace the former responsibilities of that role with the biblically commanded role of the parent (Baucham 2007, 90, 182).

Baucham presents a crisis that is the result of a shift in family values and

priorities. The church, according to Baucham, instead of thwarting this crisis, has encouraged it through the process of implementing programs and practices which are either in direct contradiction to the Word of God, or not well enough substantiated by the Word of God, to validate their continued practice (Baucham 2007, 175-76). Smith, Baucham, and Wright make one point of intersection that dynamically influences this study and the future generations of adolescents that are currently in church and those currently being born into the church. It is the fact that, according to Baucham and Wright, parents are biblically commanded to *be* the number one influencer in their child's life in regard to religious matters (Baucham 2007, 89; Wright and Graves 2007, 145), and the fact that, according to Smith's research, they *are* the number one influencer in the child's life in regard to religious matters (Smith and Denton 2005, 261). Mark DeVries does contend that the parents are important, but does not appear to go to the point the other three individuals go.

The Influence of the Parents in the Lives of the Children

Baucham calls for parents to begin to disciple their children in the Bible in the context of the home. Smith calls for the churches to step up and fill the gap with more well trained individuals that would not just be positive role models, but also the source of attention. Wright calls for the church to be co-champions with the parents and partner with the parents as they disciple their children in the fear and instruction of the Lord (Wright and Graves 2007, 105). DeVries calls for the parents and the greater community to step up and fill the gap (DeVries 2004, 103-04).

Each model strives to reverse the trend of delinquent parent discipleship. In addition to the conditions already mentioned, the models also agree that no matter which

model a church may choose to begin and implement in their congregation—it will take time. Unless one is planting a church, any movement away from the current contemporary model will need to be gradual enough, so as not to cause division and thwart the work of the church, but it must be done. The church must not just find a way in which to retain its youth into adulthood, but more importantly establish a biblical pattern which allows parents to raise their children into mature Christians. Each church must examine its current methods and consider if what they are doing is helping or hurting the family in regard to multi-generational faithfulness. The four innovative models considered here are striving to redefine the church's efforts to ensure the faithfulness of the generations to come. All of them have good intentions.

Points of Divergence: Where the Models Do Not Meet

As much as the models have a similar goal in mind, the discipleship of children, the primary point of divergence for the models rests in how each suggests the discipleship occurs. As indicated above, they each see the importance of the parents in the lives of the children, some, however, do not place the same responsibility on the parents in the process.

An effective way to understand the similarities along with the differences of these models can be seen in the diagram below (Figure 2). All approaches have certain points at which the scholars would agree and the model would look like its neighbor. They all hold to the supremacy of Scripture. All agree that any movement for change in the church must be gradual. All the models assert a need for the generations to interact. Each model calls for the parents to be trained for the sake of the spiritual lives of the children. The areas of the diagram where there is overlap represent these and other areas

of congruency. The areas where the diagram does not overlap represent areas unique to that specific ministry model.

The family-based model and the family-integrated model do not overlap. The first purports a methodology which utilizes the programming and staff of the church while the latter vehemently opposes the function of age-segregated functions within the church. The first sees a place for programs and professionals as it pertains to spiritual orphans or ill-equipped parents. The second demonstrates the need to train parents to fulfill this role in the lives of their own children as well as the lives of children with a single parent or no parent at all. Although they may come close in certain regard to a common understanding of the need to reach the youth, the manner in which that is done will never be able to intersect with these two models.

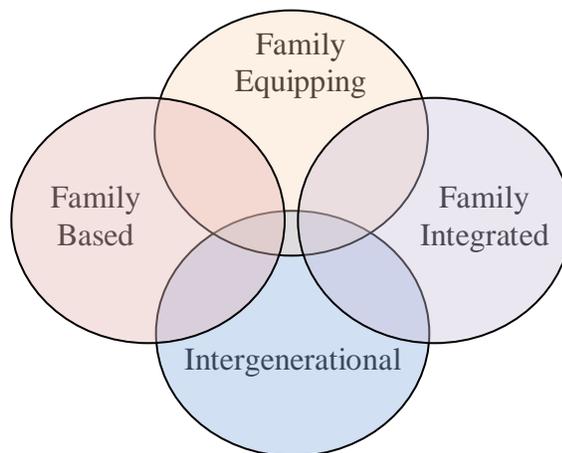


Figure 2: Family ministry models and methods

The Present Story in Family Ministry

The issue of reaching youth through the core family has been realized and is

being addressed at magnificent rates. Although not all institutions and scholars agree about the particulars, three of the six Southern Baptist seminaries have adjusted their approach to youth and family ministry to address the concerns discussed above. The models that have been gaining popularity and those individuals who promote them, amidst their differences, do have certain characteristics in common.

The question which remains is “Are they working?” Or more specifically “What is working?” Are there specific characteristics of the various models that are working better than others? As we consider the theological mandate for parents to be primarily involved in the discipleship of their children, which of these models creates the best atmosphere for that to happen? Which churches, models aside, are being most effective in the training of parents to disciple their own children? Who’s good intentions best replicate God’s intentions?

Timothy Paul Jones, in his book, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, asserts that “every church is called to some form of family ministry. At the same time, there is not one single model of family ministry that will work in every community of faith” (Jones et al. 2009, 53). Is there, however, some way to determine what practices are effective? Is there a set of tools that, when implemented, a church could use to transform the lives of their youth through the biblical mandate of the parents?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This chapter outlines the methods which were used in order to explore the best practices for training parents for household family discipleship. In addition to a description of the research procedures, this chapter describes the instrumentation used in conjunction with the research method, the population which was examined along with the sampling procedures, and any delimitations this study may have required. An explanation of limitations to the generalizations of the study is also considered.

Research Questions Synopsis

The following questions directed the collection and analysis of the data for the research study.

1. To what degree, and in what ways, do parents perceive and practice family discipleship as a household parental responsibility?
2. In what ways have churches taught parents their responsibility to disciple their own children?
3. In what ways do churches train and support parents in the congregation to fulfill their role as primary disciplers?
4. In what ways do churches assess the effectiveness of training parents to disciple their children?

Research Design Overview

The methodological design for this study was to explore the perceptions and practices of parents concerning household family discipleship and the ways in which

churches train parents to perform such practices. In order to most effectively establish a sample population for this study, an expert panel was assembled. The expert panel was compiled of nine individuals who have a significant voice within the evangelical world as it pertains to family ministry, within three distinct models of family ministry (family-based, family-integrated, and family-equipping). Upon submission of a list of 17 churches from the expert panel, 12 churches chose to participate, and all eligible parents from each participating church were invited to take part in the online survey (Phase 1). “The Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was hosted by an online data collection service and included an option to be entered into a drawing for one of three \$50.00 gift cards. The survey consisted of 25 questions and should have taken no more than 10 minutes to complete. The questions were designed to identify the parents’ perception of their role and responsibility as well as gauge the actual household practices which the parents are performing on a regular basis. The church’s influence in the performance of such practices was also explored. In an effort to capture the perspectives and practices of the parents as well as that of the church leadership, both were examined.

Phase 2 of the study consisted of phone interviews with all 12 of the participating churches about the overall ministry approach and the specific plan or process in place to fulfill the family ministry objectives. Since the participating churches were all nominated by the expert panel for their excellence in family ministry, all of the churches were invited to be interviewed about their family ministry approach and practices. In addition, three churches were selected to participate in case studies. These churches were identified through purposive sampling based upon the performance of the parents on the survey instrument. Each survey participant was asked to identify the name

and location of their church, and once the surveys were scored, 3 of the 5 churches with the highest mean scores participated in an individual case study.

The case studies included face-to-face interviews with key pastoral staff, collecting data from the church website, requesting copies of the events calendars, staff handbooks, curricula, job descriptions, and notes from business meetings. On-site visits with 2 of the 3 churches enhanced the understanding of the daily efforts given to family ministry as well as provided opportunities to evaluate attitude and behavior of the church staff, parents, and families in general. Further data was collected through additional phone interviews conducted as necessary with the key leaders in the church and those involved in the regular implementation of the family ministry objectives.

Population

The research population for the first phase of this study was parents (married, man and woman) who have at least one child under the age of 18 years and greater than the age of 18 months living at the same home or residence as the parents, and who actively attend a conservative evangelical church which has and implements a family ministry philosophy and approach. The research population for the second phase of this study was conservative evangelical churches which have and implement a family ministry philosophy and approach.

Samples and Delimitations

In order to narrow the research population from all churches who claim to hold and conduct a family ministry approach, to those who are considered by the greater conservative evangelical community to be doing family ministry well, an expert panel was formed to identify those churches which are in fact conducting family ministry well.

Because the expert panel was comprised of conservative evangelical leaders, it is highly likely that all congregations nominated are conservative evangelical by nature. If this is the case, the research will most likely be delimited to conservative evangelical congregations. After the expert panel submitted their list of churches, every church was invited to be involved in the first phase of the study, while the second phase of the study was limited to only a select group of churches.

The research sample of the first phase was delimited to parents as defined by the researcher (married, man and woman) who are actively involved in the church listed by the expert panel. The research sample was further delimited to those parents who have at least one child under the age of eighteen years but older than eighteen months living at home. This population was crucial in identifying which churches are most effective in their efforts towards family ministry as defined by the literature and the researcher.

The research sample of the second phase consisted of select churches from the list provided by the expert panel. The churches were purposively sampled using the results of the first phase of study. A question in the survey asked parents to identify the name and location of where they attend church. Once the survey closed at midnight on January 31, 2011, the results from each individual church were tallied. The churches with the top five mean scores were considered for further case study. The church with the highest score was not case studied due to the fact that the church consisted of only 9 families and a case study may not produce or provide adequate data to substantiate a full case study. The data collected through the phone interview was deemed sufficient. The church which scored the second highest was asked on multiple occasions for further

participation, but failed to respond to the requests and was subsequently removed from the list of possible churches to case study. As with the first church, the data collected from the phone interview was itself sufficient enough to contribute to this research. The next three churches, with the next three highest scores, agreed to participate in individual case study. Two of the three churches participated through on-site visits by the researcher and his family and the third church participated through additional phone interviews and further artifacts collection.

This study was confined to the churches identified by the expert panel as being churches who are effectively conducting family ministry (“family ministry” was defined for the expert panel). Phase 1 of this study was confined to the survey of parents who are actively involved in one of the identified churches. This study was also confined to those parents who currently have at least one child under the age of eighteen years but greater than eighteen months living at home. This phase of the study was further confined to the definition of parents as married, man and woman.

Phase 2 of this study was confined to the study of churches identified by the expert panel as churches effectively conducting family ministry. The churches were further narrowed to those whose parents, identified in Phase 1 above, scored highest on the research instrument in regard to their perspectives and practices in family household discipleship.

Limitations of Generalizations

The quantitative survey of parents was limited to the scope of the objective responses given by the parents completing the survey. The survey was further limited by the inability of the researcher to observe and analyze the attitude of the survey

participants. Since the survey was completed by parents, the generalization of the findings cannot include the responses of any youth or their perceived effectiveness of the church's efforts or the parent's efforts in the household family discipleship practices.

Research Instrumentation

The instrumentation for Phase 1 of this study was the survey, Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey, designed and validated by Timothy Paul Jones. The survey was conducted online, hosted by an online survey company. Jones has determined the Cronbach α to be .88 for the first 8 items on the survey. The remaining 8 items on his survey serve as frequency data only. This instrument demonstrates the parent's perception of family discipleship as well as revealing some of the regular practices within the home. The survey consisted, in its original format, of 16 questions. With the permission of the survey developer, eight questions were added to a demographic section of the instrument which was placed at the end of the survey. Questions 17, 18, and 19 asked questions regarding the survey-taker's marital status, gender, and age range. Questions 20, 21, and 22 asked specific questions about the children of the survey-taker. Question 23 asked about the survey-takers church attendance and question 25 asked the survey-taker to identify the church where he or she attends.

Phase 2 instrumentation included interviews of all nominated, participating churches. These interviews were conducted over the phone, and were recorded with permission. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a greater picture of the efforts to which the church has gone to reach out to parents and explore certain specific functions that the church has undertaken to ensure parents are practicing household family

discipleship. The interviews were conducted with the primary person involved in the coordination and implementation of the family ministry approach at the individual churches as well as the Senior Pastor if this was not the primary person involved in implementation.

In addition to the telephone interviews, three of the churches were selected for case study. These three churches were identified by the average score the parents received on the survey. The churches with the top five mean scores were considered for further case study. The church with the highest score was not case studied due to the fact that the church consisted of only 9 families and a case study may not produce or provide adequate or additional data to substantiate a full case study. The data collected through the phone interview was deemed sufficient. The church which scored the second highest was asked on multiple occasions for further participation, but failed to respond to the requests and was subsequently removed from the list of possible churches to case study. As with the first church, the data collected from the phone interview was itself sufficient enough to contribute to this research. The next three churches, with the next three highest scores, agreed to participate in individual case study. Two of the three churches participated through on-site visits by the researcher and his family and the third church participated through additional phone interviews and further artifacts collection. See summary in Table 1.

The case study instrumentation of this stage of Phase 2 included on-site visits, face-to-face interviews with key pastoral staff, collecting data from the church website, requesting copies of the events calendars, staff handbooks, curriculums, job descriptions, evaluating church documentation, observing a worship service, and a small group

Table 1: Case study participation summary

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Mean Score out of 6.0</i>	<i>Case Study Participation</i>
1	Church I – FIC	5.652	No. Small congregation
2	Church J – FIC	5.215	No. Non-responsive
3	Church A – FIC	5.140	Yes. On-site.
4	Church C – FEM	5.129	Yes. On-site.
5	Church L – FIC	4.964	Yes. Distance artifact collection
6	Church D – FIC	4.915	No.
7	Church F – FIC	4.848	No.
8	Church K – FEM	4.457	No.
9	Church B – FEM	4.431	No.
10	Church G – FEM	4.309	No.
11	Church E – FBM	4.308	No.
12	Church H – FEM	4.014	No.

function. While the third church provided this information via the phone and e-mail, on-site visits with the first two churches enhanced the understanding of the daily efforts given to family ministry as well as provided opportunity to evaluate the attitude and behavior of the church staff and parents. Key individuals were targeted for the information listed above. These key individuals included the senior pastor, elders, small group leaders, active families, deacons, and volunteers within the church.

Research Procedures

The following paragraphs outline and describe the process of the research. This

mixed methods study had two phases, with multiple stages within the two phases. Although the phases were sequential, the stages did occur concurrently.

Phase 1: Stage 1, Expert Panel

To begin, an expert panel was assembled and asked to submit a list of churches they felt perform family ministry well. The researcher identified the expert panel members through their significant contributions to and identification with one of three specific family ministry models (see Appendix 1). The researcher asked the individual members to participate based on their knowledge and expertise in the field of family ministry and their familiarity with churches conducting family ministry. The researcher sent the expert panel an e-mail requesting their participation in the study and explained that their reply to the email with a list of churches was consent to participate in the study. Negative replies were welcomed and desired. The e-mail explained their role in the study, to nominate no more than three churches which in their expert opinion are conducting family ministry well (see Appendix 2). The researcher defined the term family ministry for the expert panel, although the researcher cannot guarantee the expert panel members adhered to this definition. The panel did not have to convene as a group, although they were informed of who else was serving on the panel by the inclusion of e-mail addresses in the “to” line of the e-mail message. Permission was granted to contact the others on the panel if they so desired.

The panel was given a brief description of the research process, as well as the definition of the term “family ministry.” They were asked to submit a list of 1 to 3 churches which they felt adhered to the definition of family ministry provided for them. The expert panel was instructed not to contact any specific congregation to seek such

information, but as a member of the expert panel their response would be based upon their own experience with the congregations that they list or the perceived reputation of the church. They were encouraged to think outside of their own congregation and consider various denominations as well. The researcher provided a deadline by which time the expert panel was to submit the list of churches by e-mail. All members of the expert panel chose to participate, all members provided their submission by the deadline, and all panel members submitted a list of at least 1, but no more than 3 churches.

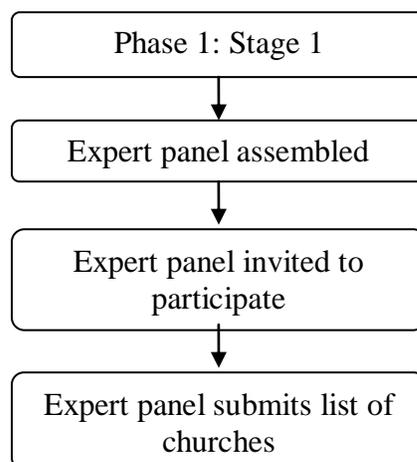


Figure 3: Phase 1, Stage 1 summary

Phase 1: Stage 2, Parent Survey

Once the list of churches was received from the expert panel and duplicate congregations reduced to a single line on the list, there were a total of 17 churches nominated for their excellence in family ministry. Of that total, 12 churches agreed to participate in the study. These 12 congregations were contacted by either phone or e-mail, and were asked permission for the parents of their congregation to participate in the

online survey. It was highly and heavily communicated that they were selected by experts in the field of family ministry as a church which stands above others in the field of family ministry.

Once permission was granted by the leadership of the church, the parents were solicited through bulletin announcements, announcements from the pulpit, and emails sent directly by the church staff. As a way of limiting the data to only those parents who fit the definition of parent as provided by the researcher as well as those parents of children under the age of 18 years but greater than the age of 18 months, the final demographic questions were designed to eliminate any responses which do not fit the demographic requirements.

The researcher utilized the existing survey titled, “The Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey.” This survey demonstrated the parents’ knowledge and understanding of their roles as primary disciplers in the lives of their children, certain actual practices within the home, and the input or participation of their church in the process. The “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” was not modified, with the exception of adding 8 additional demographic questions and a final question allowed the participant to enter their email address for the gift card drawing, with the permission of the survey developer.

Upon completion of the survey, the participants were given the option of being entered into a drawing for one of three \$50.00 gift cards. A deadline of January 31, 2011 was established by the researcher as a sufficient window to collect the necessary data. The data was tallied for each church and the results organized sequentially by mean score (highest to lowest). The mean score was determined by those parents taking the Family

Discipleship and Family Practices Survey. The churches with the top five mean scores were considered for further case study. The church with the highest score was not case studied due to the fact that the church consisted of only 9 families and a case study may not produce or provide adequate or additional data to substantiate a full case study. The data collected through the phone interview was deemed sufficient. The church which scored the second highest was asked on multiple occasions for further participation, but failed to respond to the requests and was subsequently removed from the list of possible churches to case study. As with the first church, the data collected from the phone interview was itself sufficient enough to contribute to this research. The next three churches, with the next three highest scores, agreed to participate in individual case studies. Two of the three churches participated through on-site visits by the researcher and his family and the third church participated through additional phone interviews and further artifacts collection (Figure 4).

Phase 2: Stage 1, Church Leader Phone Interview

During Phase 1: Stage 2 of the study, the interviews for Phase 2: Stage 1 of the study commenced. The researcher contacted each church by e-mail or phone and explained the purpose of the interview, their nomination by the expert panel, and the significance the research means for the advancement of family ministry. At that time an interview was scheduled with the primary person involved in the implementation of family ministry as well as the senior pastor, if he is not the primary person implementing the family ministry practices. The senior pastor did not always participate in the interview. The interviews of Phase 2 were conducted during Phase 1 of the study as all

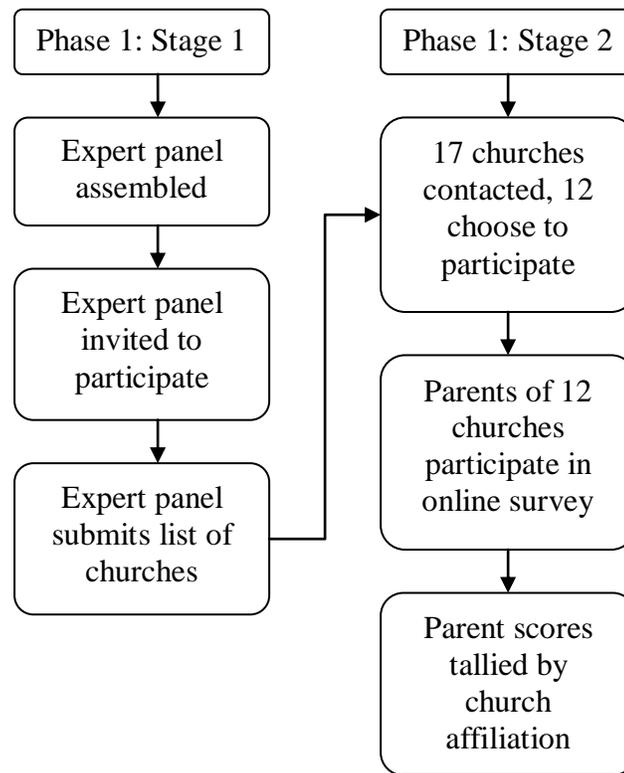


Figure 4: Phase 1, Stage 2 summary

churches were to be interviewed anyway, and the results from Phase 1 would not influence the data collection of this stage of Phase 2 (Figure 5).

Phase 2: Stage 2, Case Study of Certain Churches

The three churches designated to participate in the second stage of Phase 2 of the study were contacted by phone or e-mail. Once contacted, the church leadership was informed of their selection to participate based upon the performance of those parents who took part in the online survey. They were asked for further participation in the case

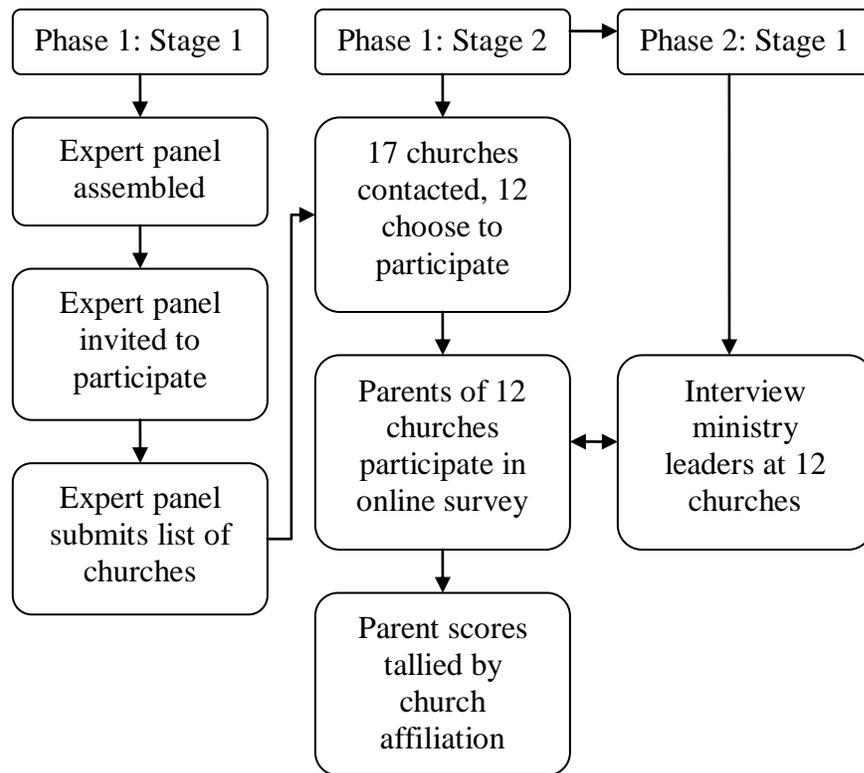


Figure 5: Phase 2, Stage 1 summary

study which involved face-to-face and phone interviews, on-site visits, collection of documentation and any other information they felt would be pertinent to the research being conducted on their efforts to train the parents for household family discipleship.

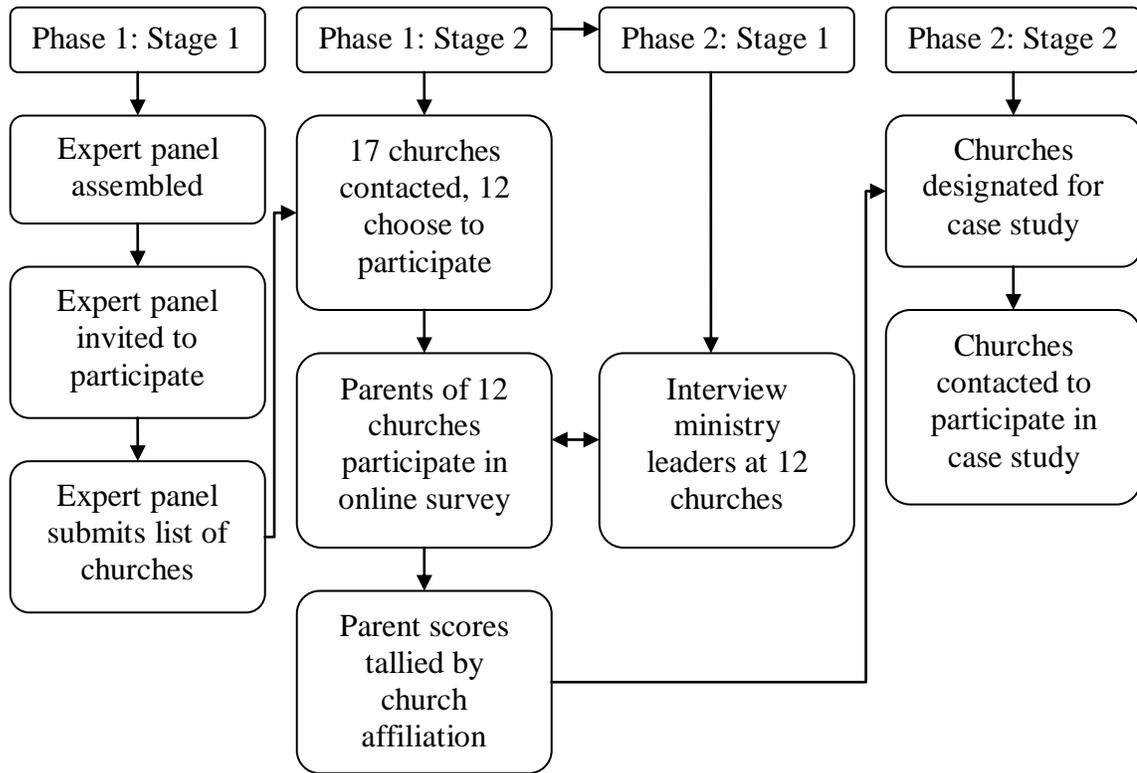


Figure 6: Research procedures summary

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This research explored the best practices for training parents for household family discipleship among churches identified as holding and conducting a family ministry philosophy and approach. This chapter will describe how the data related to this study were compiled and analyzed. The findings and displays will be addressed in conjunction with the research question to which they pertain. The overall strengths and weaknesses of the methodology will also be addressed.

Compilation Protocol

This research study collected data in two phases. The first stage of the study involved assembling an expert panel in the field of family ministry. Nine individuals were asked to participate on the expert panel based upon their expertise and notoriety in family ministry. Each individual on the expert panel was asked to provide a list of churches (1 to 3) which they felt, in their professional opinion, conduct family ministry well. The panel was not asked to convene as a group, but was asked to submit their responses individually via email. Although the individual panel member was expected to provide their own opinion as an individual representing the field of family ministry, the panel members were not prevented from contacting each other for discussion of the matter at hand. The individual lists were compiled into a single list, eliminating any duplicate submissions. The final list consisted of 17 churches in all, with each panel

member submitting at least 1 church, and no panel member permitted to submit more than 3.

Phase 1 Compilation

Phase 1 of the study utilized the list of churches provided by the expert panel to conduct the quantitative phase of the study. The churches identified by the expert panel were contacted by phone or e-mail and informed of the fact that they were identified by an expert panel for their excellence in philosophy and/or approach to family ministry, and asked to cooperate with and participate in the study. Of the 17 churches nominated, all churches were contacted, and 12 churches chose to participate. The 5 churches which declined to participate did so either by directly communicating that desire, or indirectly, by failure to respond at all to the request. Of the 12 churches, 6 were identified as Baptist either by the church name or denominational affiliation, 1 was identified as Presbyterian (PCA), and the remaining 5 were independent or non-denominational.

Each church was guaranteed anonymous reporting with no reference to any specific church or geographical information which may lead an individual to draw conclusions as to the location of the church. This phase of the study required the church to promote, advertise, and encourage the parents to visit the online survey and complete the 25 questions, at which time they would be eligible to be entered into a drawing for one of three \$50.00 gift cards. The churches were provided with a scripted announcement to be made during the normal announcement period of the worship services as well as information to include in the church emails that were sent out. The churches were contacted on an individual basis for follow up requests based upon the response level of the individual churches.

During this first phase of the study, stage one of Phase 2 commenced (see Figure 5 above). While the parents were responding to the survey, the individual churches on the list were contacted and asked to schedule an interview with the person primarily responsible for the ministry to families as well as the senior pastor, if the senior pastor was not the primary person. Each church was guaranteed anonymous reporting with no specific reference to any church or geographic information which may lead an individual to draw conclusions as to the location of the church. In addition to other interview questions, each church was asked to identify themselves with one of three specific family ministry models. Definitions of the three models were provided by the researcher upon request. The model affiliation was self identified by congregational leadership based upon the definitions provided by the researcher.

The survey data collection period ended on January 31, 2011. The surveys were initially scored to determine the individual churches mean score, and later were analyzed using ANOVA, multiple regression analysis, and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (Appendix 7). The surveys were initially analyzed to determine which parents are performing a certain set of discipleship practices and the frequency of certain practices in conjunction with the perceptions. Responses from individual churches (identified by the participants response to question 24) were congregated to create a combined mean score for each church. The results of the statistical analysis of the survey results will be presented in this chapter through the use of tables, lists, and figures, as necessary. The survey results were used to identify those churches which have the highest percentage of parents participating in, and leading, household family discipleship practices and perceptions.

Phase 2 Compilation

Phase 2 of this study, the qualitative phase, was comprised of two stages. The first stage of Phase 2 involved interviewing all the churches nominated by the expert panel which chose to participate. These interviews were scheduled for 30 minute time slots, and were conducted with either the senior pastor, the individual primarily responsible for family ministry in the church, the elders, or any person that the pastor felt could give insight into the family ministry approach of the church. In certain cases the researcher did not contact the pastor, but contacted an individual on staff at the church who oversees the area of family ministry. In those cases, it was this staff member, and not the senior pastor who invited others to join the conversation.

The second stage of Phase 2 was based upon the data collected in the quantitative stage of Phase 1. Question 24 in the survey asked parents to identify the name and location of the church where they were actively involved. Once the survey closed at midnight on January 31, 2011, the results from each individual church were tallied to find a mean score for each church. The churches with the top five mean scores were considered for further case study.

The case studies included on-site visits, document collection, face-to-face interviews, phone interviews, and researcher observation. The results of the data will be presented in this chapter through the use of tables, lists, and figures, as necessary. The qualitative data collected in this phase of the research were used to provide a more descriptive summary of the best practices of churches which are reflected in the homes of the families as identified by the quantitative data.

Demographics of Churches Nominated by the Expert Panel

A total of 17 individual churches were nominated by the expert panel. Of those 17 churches, 12 participated in the study. The 12 churches differed greatly in many aspects. Church congregation size ranged from 9 families to 1800 families. Six of the 12 churches identify themselves as Baptist either by denominational affiliation or church name, 1 is a member of the Presbyterian church (PCA), and the other 5 are independent or non-denominational. The churches also ranged in geographical location with clusters in certain parts of the country. The clusters of churches, although they were located in the same general geographical region, were not nominated by the same individual on the expert panel, and not necessarily a geographical region represented by a panel member. Different panel members were identifying different churches in the same general geographical region. Three of the 12 churches are located within 200 miles of each other on the eastern sea board, 4 are located in central and southeast Texas, 2 are located in Washington state, and the final 3, although not as close as the other churches, are located in the upper portion of the southern United States and the southeastern portion of the Midwest.

Six of the churches identified themselves with the family-integrated church model (FIC) as defined by the researcher, 5 of the churches identified themselves with the family-equipping model (FEM) as defined by the researcher, and 1 church identified itself as a family-based church (FBM). Although 6 churches identified themselves with the family-integrated church, 4 of the churches further explained that differences exist between two distinct varieties of family-integrated church. One of the churches which identified itself as family-equipping, did so suggesting that the researchers definition of

family-integrated church was quite strict and exclusionary. After further discussion, it appeared that with a less exclusionary definition, it is possible that this church, too, would have identified with the family-integrated church model.

Quantitative Demographic and Sample Data

Four of the final 9 questions of the 25 question survey were used to identify that the individuals taking the survey were qualified parents as defined by the research. Responses to these 4 questions assisted the researcher in filtering the responses to only include those survey results from respondents that met the criteria of the research as it pertains to the definition of parent, age of children, and involvement at church. The demographic data collected in this part of the research include: (Table 2) marital status and gender of survey participant, (Table 3) age range of parent and age range of children, (Table 4) the total number of children residing in the home and the total number of children grown and out of the home, (Table 5) church attendance trends of parents, and (Table 6) number of respondents per church. Although families were asked to provide only one response per household, there is no guarantee that some of the qualified respondents in Table 6 were not from the same household. A double asterisk indicates a qualifying question. The responses below are based on 1,206 total respondents.

Table 2: Qualified parents

<i>Demographic variables</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
**Married, husband and wife?	1,130	76
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Gender? Which parent is taking the survey?	415	791

Table 3: Age range

<i>Question</i>	<i>18-25 yrs</i>	<i>26-35</i>	<i>36-45</i>	<i>46-55</i>	<i>56+</i>
What is your age range?	15	290	461	344	96
What is the age range of your children?	<i>18m-35m</i>	<i>3-6yr</i>	<i>7-12</i>	<i>13-15</i>	<i>16-18</i>
<i>#'s are higher due to multiple children in same household</i>	269	422	558	358	427

Table 4: Number of children

<i>Question</i>	0	1-2	3	4	5+
**Number of children currently living at home?	96	750	202	85	73
Number of living children out of the home or older than 18 years of age?	815	313	50	14	14

Table 5: Parental church attendance

<i>Question</i>	0	1	2	3	4+
**How many times a month do you attend church?	10	30	63	139	964

Findings and Displays: Quantitative Survey

The survey questions sought to identify the degree to which parents perceive their responsibility of household family discipleship and the ways in which they practice household family discipleship. The results were also analyzed to determine if there was

Table 6: Family responses by church

Church with model affiliation	<i># of qualified respondents</i>	<i>total # of families *based on estimates provided by the church</i>
Church A – FIC	31	51.6%
Church B – FEM	98	23.9%
Church C – FEM	14	46.6%
Church D – FIC	20	52.5%
Church E – FBM	286	47.6%
Church F – FIC	19	63.3%
Church G – FEM	208	26%
Church H – FEM	250	13.8%
Church I – FIC	9	100%
Church J – FIC	12	50%
Church K – FEM	36	28.8%
Church L – FIC	17	28.3%

any correlation between the parents' perceptions and the frequency of their specific practices. The first 8 survey questions of the quantitative portion of the study were used to determine the parent's perception of their role as it pertains to household family discipleship. The second set of 8 questions pertained to specific practices, with the frequency of those practices, through which the parents might actually fulfill household family discipleship on a regular basis. The survey as a whole sought to explore the specific practices that the parents use in their household family discipleship approach, the

church's involvement in the training process, and the parents' perception of their responsibility as the primary disciplers.

Additionally, the research questions (RQ's) explored the practices of the church in training parents in the congregation to fulfill this role as primary discipler. Although the quantitative phase briefly addressed these questions, the qualitative phase of the research proved more effective for data collection in this area. The qualitative questions sought specific measures that the church takes to teach, motivate, inspire, involve, and train the parents, in addition to any way in which the church might assess the effectiveness of their efforts with the parents.

Research Question 1: Parental Perception and Practice

In response to the first research question, the researcher categorized the perceptions (Table 7) of the parents as well as the specific practices in the home (Table 8) based upon the individual responses to the questions on the Family Perspectives and Practices survey. The responses presented in the tables which follow are based on 933 qualified respondents.

Table 7: Parental perceptions

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.	4.0%	9.4%	8.6%	26.9%	29.2%	22.0%

Table 7—Continued. Parental perceptions

2. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.	16.1%	19.0%	13.0%	28.1%	18.5%	5.4%
3. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.	32.8%	41.2%	13.9%	8.1%	2.7%	1.3%
4. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.	59.2%	31.9%	5.4%	2.4%	0.4%	0.8%
5. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.	48.7%	33.3%	9.4%	5.5%	2.0%	1.1%

Table 7—Continued. Parental perceptions

6. Parents—and particularly fathers—have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.	1.7%	0.1%	0.4%	4.5%	30.7%	62.6%
7. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the Gospel with others.	49.2%	38.0%	7.3%	3.9%	1.0%	0.6%
8. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.	1.9%	7.7%	6.7%	25.0%	39.1%	19.6%

Table 8: Parental practices

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once</i>	<i>A couple times</i>	<i>3 to 4 times</i>	<i>5 or 6 times</i>	<i>7 or more times</i>
9. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past WEEK have I prayed aloud with any of my children?	19.0%	10.4%	14.8%	11.8%	17.1%	26.9%
10. How many times in the past WEEK has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned OFF?	6.6%	7.0%	15.4%	21.2%	19.8%	29.9%

Table 8—Continued. Parental Practices

11. How many times in the past MONTH have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?	8.3%	5.9%	16.3%	14.5%	13.9%	41.2%
12. How many times in the past MONTH have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?	4.7%	3.5%	15.8%	15.2%	16.0%	44.8%
13. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?	17.4%	5.9%	17.6%	11.0%	11.1%	37.0%
14. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?	9.1%	7.4%	24.4%	18.0%	14.9%	26.2%
15. How many times in the past YEAR have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?	39.5%	11.8%	23.9%	12.1%	5.4%	7.3%
16. How often in the past YEAR has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual growth?	38.2%	8.5%	21.1%	11.8%	6.0%	14.5%

The responses from Table 7 were given a numeric value based upon which end of the Likert-type scale the response fell. For some of the questions the *strongly disagree* polar end scored a 6 while for other questions, the *strongly agree* polar end scored a 6. The responses from Table 8 were given numeric values as follows: never-1, once-2, a

couple times-3, three to four times-4, five to six times-5, and seven or more times-6.

In addition to the data displayed in Tables 7 and 8, the researcher also tallied the churches individually in order to determine the mean scores for each church and the rank of each church within the scoring structure. The researcher was able to establish the churches which scored the highest mean scores, and subsequently whose parents properly perceive and actively practice household family discipleship practices. Once this data was compiled, the researcher was able to determine the churches which have the highest scores for parents perceiving and participating in household family discipleship, and order the churches in descending order (Table 9).

Table 9: Parents performance by church

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Mean Score out of 6.0</i>
1	Church I – FIC	5.652
2	Church J – FIC	5.215
3	Church A – FIC	5.140
4	Church C – FEM	5.129
5	Church L – FIC	4.964
6	Church D – FIC	4.915
7	Church F – FIC	4.848
8	Church K – FEM	4.457
9	Church B – FEM	4.431
10	Church G – FEM	4.309
11	Church E – FBM	4.308
12	Church H – FEM	4.014

It is also interesting to consider the population of the various churches in regard to their mean scores. Table 10 displays the church's mean scores parallel with their population (# of qualified families). Note that the smaller the church population, the higher the mean score.

Table 10: Performance and population by church

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Church Family Population</i>	<i>Mean Score out of 6.0</i>
1	Church I – FIC	9	5.652
2	Church J – FIC	24	5.215
3	Church A – FIC	51	5.140
4	Church C – FEM	30	5.129
5	Church L – FIC	60	4.964
6	Church D – FIC	40	4.915
7	Church F – FIC	23	4.848
8	Church K – FEM	125	4.457
9	Church B – FEM	410	4.431
10	Church G – FEM	800	4.309
11	Church E – FBM	600	4.308
12	Church H – FEM	1800	4.014

Summary of Research Question 1 Findings

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationships between the perceptions of the survey participants and the behaviors of the

participants. Although there were a few relationships which showed no correlation between the two variables of perception and behavior, the data do demonstrate that a relationship exists between the parents' perceptions and their practices. The only two perceptions which did not have any correlation with the behaviors was (1) the respondent's degree of agreement with the belief that their church has helped them to develop a clear plan for their child's spiritual growth and (2) the respondent's degree of agreement with the belief that parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children. See Appendix 7.

Perception 6: Parents and Particularly Fathers

The stronger the agreement with the statement that "Parents—and particularly fathers—have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children" the more frequent the parents read or discussed the Bible with any of their children in the preceding month, the more frequent the parent had discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaging in day-to-day activities in the preceding month, and the more frequent the parent had engaged the family in any family devotional or worship time in the home in the preceding 2 months. This is displayed in Figure A6 (Appendix 8) below, where P6 represents perception 6, or question 6 from the survey instrument, and the frequency represents the frequency of all behaviors. The way this informs the research is to suggest that when responsibility is perceived and realized, then parental practices also increase.

Perception 1: Prioritization of Family Devotions

The stronger the agreement with the statement "I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule," the higher the frequency of

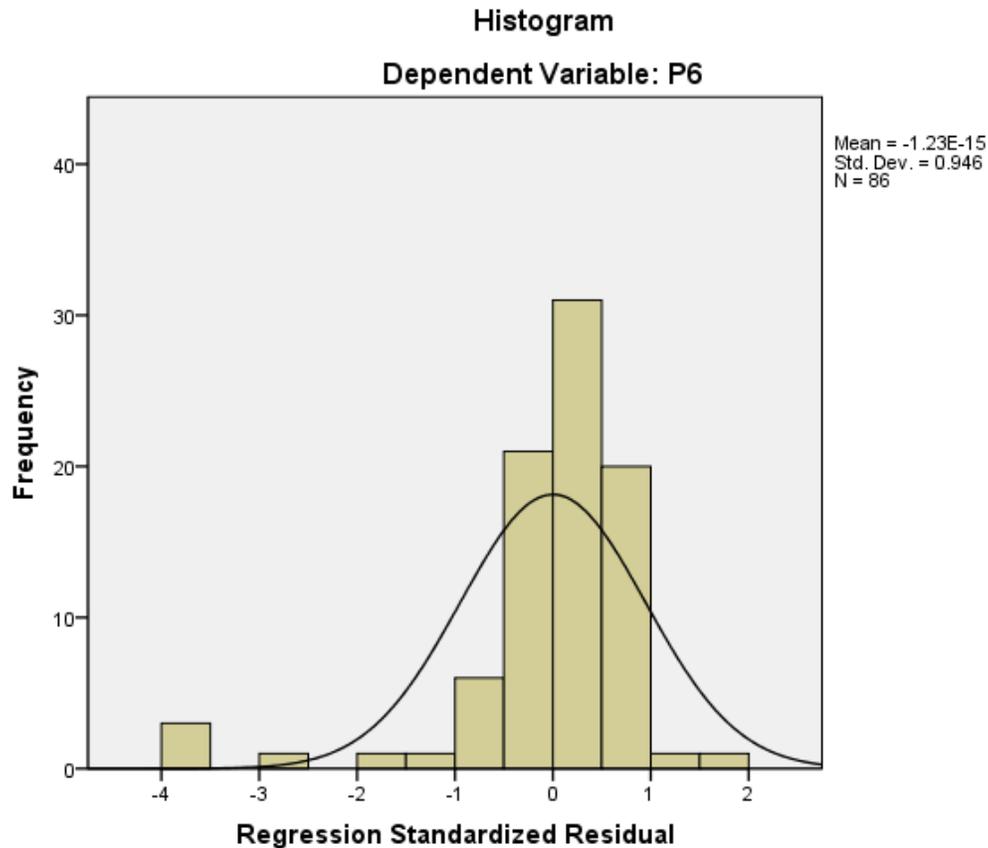


Figure A6

discussing the Bible, discussing any biblical or spiritual matters while engaging in day-to-day activities, and family devotional or worship times. And much of the same could be said about parents praying with their children. Interestingly enough, there was stronger agreement with the statement “I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family’s schedule” among the respondents claiming to have 3 or more children living at home. This is demonstrated in Figure A1 (Appendix 8) below, where P1 represents perception 1, or question 1 from the survey instrument, and the frequency represents the frequency of all behaviors.

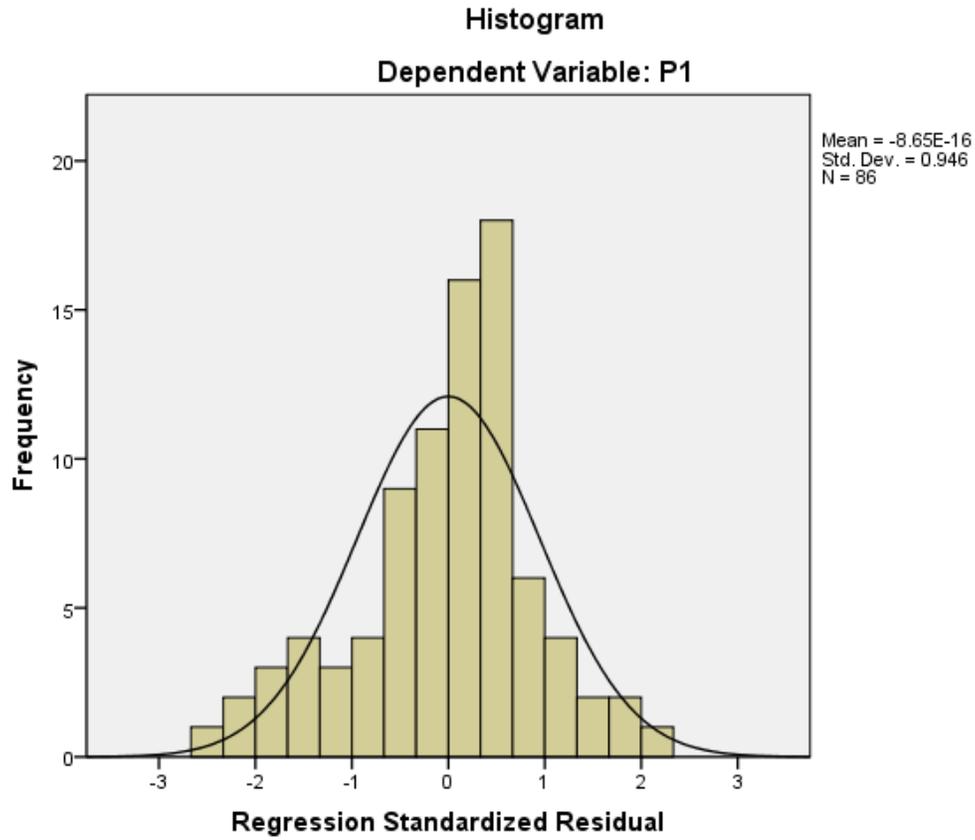


Figure A1

The Reality of Perceptions and Practices

Although there appeared to be no difference in the responses between male and female respondents in regard to agreement with the statement, “I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family’s schedule,” when responding to the statement, “Parents—and particularly fathers—have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children,” the male responses fell overwhelmingly more to the extreme right of the spectrum than female responses. The stronger the disagreement with the statement, “I would like to do regular family

devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now,” the higher the frequency in discussing the Bible, discussing any biblical or spiritual matters during day-to-day activities, and engaging in family devotions or worship times in the home. The inverse is also true. For those respondents who indicated that they were, at the present time, too busy for devotions or family Bible readings, the frequency of the assessed behaviors were less. This supports the reality of their situation, they desire more because their reality affords them little if any.

The case could be made that those respondents who showed they agreed with the statement that “I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while,” actually have a desire to do what is right when it comes to the spiritual lives of their family members. The negative correlations appear when the behavior’s are directly tied to family engagement in faith. Uncovering the reasons, or disruptors, could prove to be one way to help families overcome family faith building.

Perception 3: Children Learning in the Church

The more someone agrees that the church is the place where children should receive their Bible teaching, the less likely they are to be engaged in family faith building or home based family discipleship activities and further be engaged with others in matters regarding the spiritual development of their families. These individuals tend to leave this to the church. This is displayed in Figure A3 (Appendix 8) below, where P3 represents perception 3, or question 3 from the survey instrument, and the frequency represents the frequency of all behaviors.

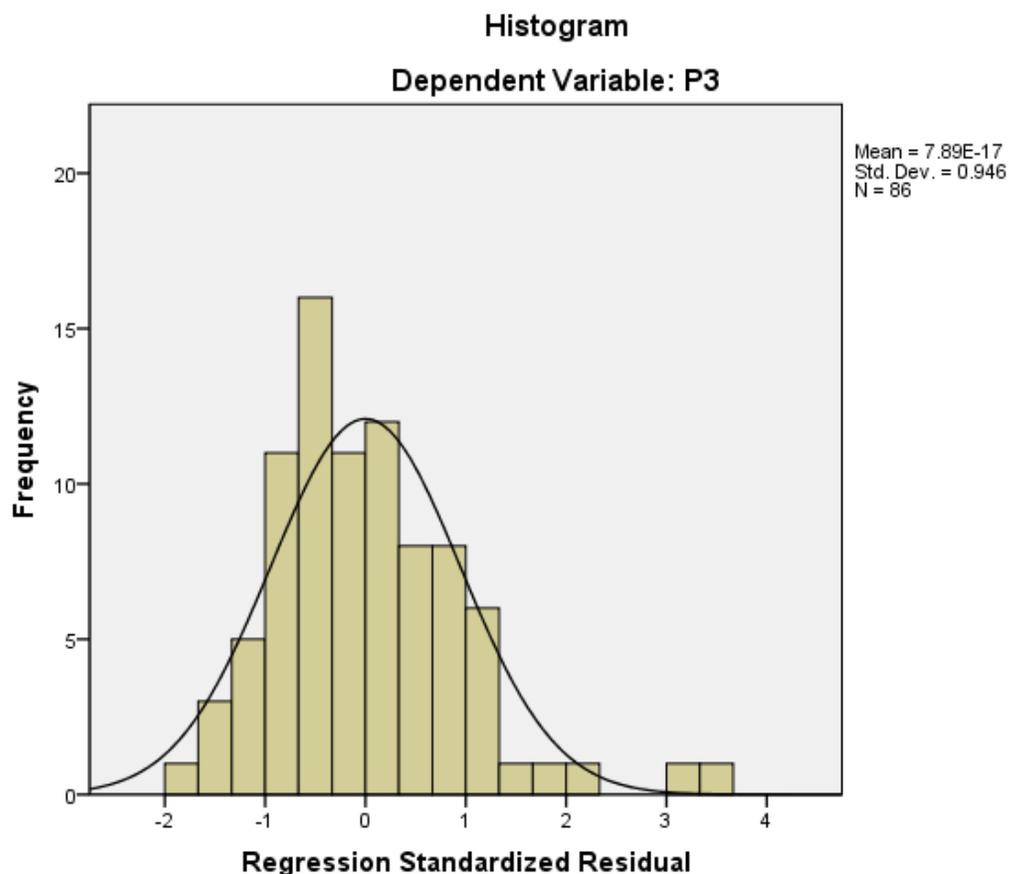


Figure A3

Perception 4: Answering Children's Spontaneous Questions

As demonstrated in Figure A4 (Appendix 8) below, where P4 represents perception 4, or question 4, and the frequency represents the frequency of all the behaviors, the more the respondents wish their child would direct their spontaneous questions to a church leader rather than the parent, the less likely the parent is to be engaged in the faith direction and discussions (behaviors 2 through 6). These respondents appear to lack confidence in their ability to keep the faith. Essentially, they have revealed that they cannot pass it along. This is significant in that, as we know, the stronger and

more confident one is in their faith; the easier it is to pass along. As we can deduce intellectually, passing along the faith requires one to own their individual faith.

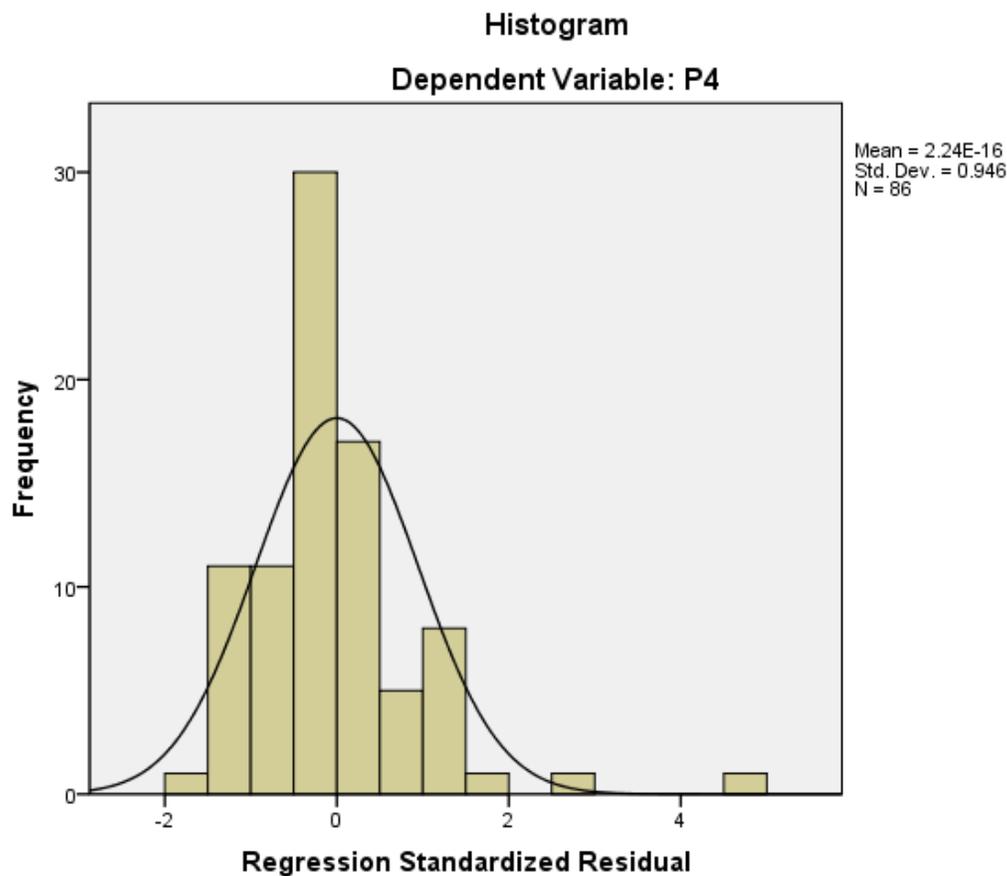


Figure A4

The data from the quantitative survey answer the question raised in research question 1. Research question 1 asked to what degree parents perceive their role and responsibility as primary disciplers, and in what ways they practice family discipleship as a household parental responsibility. Based upon the performance and frequency of

practices of the respondents from the participating churches, these parents perceive their role as primary disciplers to a very high degree. The data also indicate that perception, in the case of these churches, relates significantly to behaviors. A full view of these perceptions can also be viewed in Appendix 8.

Findings and Displays: Qualitative Interviews

The demographics of the 12 churches were discussed above. One additional demographic should be included before moving forward. It seems significant to the research to display the rank of the churches along with the model of family ministry with which the churches associated. Table 11 demonstrates this below. Although church C identified itself with the family-equipping model, the interview participants explained during the interview that the reason for selecting family-equipping was because they felt the researcher's definition of family-integrated church was too strict.

This section will report the findings from the first stage of Phase 2 of the study; the stage where all participating churches were interviewed. This phase of the study addressed research questions 2, 3, and 4. Additionally, the second stage of Phase Two also addressed these same research questions. The information will be reported through the use of explanation and narrative. Although the information is presented in a specific order, this does not in any way suggest a rank or intended structure to the information presented. In an effort to protect the anonymity of the individuals and churches taking part in the survey, names and geographical locations have been omitted to protect those individuals who have been promised anonymity. For this reason, quotations will not be referenced if derived from any of the interview material whether written or spoken.

Table 11: Church rank with church model

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Church Model</i>
1	Church I	FIC
2	Church J	FIC
3	Church A	FIC
4	Church C	FEM
5	Church L	FIC
6	Church D	FIC
7	Church F	FIC
8	Church K	FEM
9	Church B	FEM
10	Church G	FEM
11	Church E	FBC
12	Church H	FEM

Throughout the interviews with the 12 churches, 7 specific practices were common throughout. The churches were not asked directly if they practice or participate in any of these specific practices below, but the practices listed below were derived from a synthesis of the 12 interviews. Although there was much consistency between the churches, no single church performed or practiced all 7 practices in their entirety. No one church looked exactly like another either. Each church, although they utilize some of the practices listed below, did so in the context of their own congregation. As will be seen in the explanations which follow, even the same practices will look different in the various

congregations based on church context, congregation culture, and established norms.

Take-Homes

The majority of churches (8 out of 12) provide a take-home of some sort for their parents to connect the conversation from church to the conversation in their homes. For some of the churches these consist of a church-wide Scripture memory sheet or Bible reading plan for the week. For other churches the take-homes consist of what was frequently referred to as “table talk questions.” One church even includes such items as coloring pages and crossword puzzles which reflect the content of the sermon as take-homes for the children. Some of the churches include these sheets in the bulletins, and others have them available at the rear of the sanctuary.

Something distinctive about these take-homes versus something that a child may receive in a Sunday school class is that the take-homes are not given to the children; they are given to the parents. The take-homes are placed in the bulletins for the parents to see and take with them at the end of the service. More than a few of the interviewees said that not only do they provide the take-homes for the parents, but that they even talk about the take-homes from the pulpit, teaching and encouraging parents on how to use such a tool. One pastor holds it up at the end of every service while he is talking to the parents about the take-home. Another pastor said that even after the take-home has been placed in the bulletin, and discussed in the adult Sunday school classes, that the parents still receive an email with an electronic version of the take-home and some further discussion topics or ideas.

One church took this take-home idea to another level. This church, on occasion, provides take-home items. The way the interviewee explained the take-home

items suggested that about once a quarter the church provides an item in relation to the sermon or text that the pastor has preached on that Sunday and the family is given guidance on how to use this item to initiate faith talks and to capitalize on God moments. Although this may be an expensive way in which to reach the families, it does change up the weekly take-homes a little bit.

It is important to point out that, for the churches which do send home take-homes, the design of the take-home is not to connect the parent to what the child has learned in a Sunday school class or children's worship hour, the take-home is designed to continue the lesson from the sermon. This appears to serve two purposes; one, it is reflection for both the parents and the child(ren), and two, the child begins to see that instruction at church connects to the home. Even those churches whose take-homes are Scripture memory lists, the Scripture memory is the Scripture that the pastor has either just preached on or will preach on the next week or near future.

Men's Training

Almost every church which participated in the study provides some level of training outside of the Sunday morning service. Seven of the churches provide regular, specific training for the men in the congregation whether or not they are a father. Another 4 churches provide training that is more specifically parental training and includes both parents. Most of the churches provide this training at least monthly, if not more frequently, and a few of the churches provide the training less frequently. For the churches that conduct the training more frequently, there is often a break in the schedule to allow the men or parents time to refresh.

Some of the churches organize the training to mimic an academic setting by

utilizing text books and even calling the training some sort of university, institute, or school. Although all churches plan the time of instruction, one church in particular has established a cycle of classes that meet on a rotating basis with complete syllabi which the pastor has developed along with lecture notes. For this church, the pastor shares the teaching with another church staff member. Other churches are not as structured in their approach. The remaining churches utilize the various leaders in the church to lead and teach the men on topics and themes that change throughout the year. For some of the churches these are led by designated elders or deacons, and other churches take the position that every man is called by God to be able to teach therefore the time of teaching is shared by many more of the men than just the elders or deacons. Most of these men's meetings coincide with a breakfast, while most of the academic types of trainings are planned for the evening.

Although participation and attendance varied church-by-church, no one church could explain to the researcher what steps the church takes in order to encourage attendance. For the larger churches, which have apparently smaller attendance and less participation per capita, the church appears to make few strides beyond the standard bulletin, pulpit, and email announcements. For these churches, even though the participation is less, parental discipleship has become such a part of the church culture, that there appears to be no need on the part of the church leaders to place extra pressure on the parents to attend the functions mostly in part to the other means by which the church leaders reach the parents.

The smaller churches also could not explain a systematic means by which they held the parents accountable for attendance at the men's meetings or the parent trainings.

These churches, too, with the exception of one church, admitted that they did not have full participation in the men's meetings or parent trainings. When pressed by the researcher, some of the churches suggested that because these functions are so much a part of the church culture, it is likely that the individuals who do not attend would also not continue long at the church. Some of the smaller churches used personal means of communication to invite and strongly encourage the attendance at the meetings and trainings. Others felt that those who do not attend the meetings would feel as though they are always on the perimeter of the church, although no church suggested that they ever asked any man or family to leave the church due to lack of participation in these meetings.

The parent trainings which take place at night, those which are often referred to as an university, institute, or school, are limited to just that—parents. The men's meetings, however, take a counter-cultural approach inviting men to attend as young as 12 years of age. Not all men's meetings open the invitation to men this young, but the ones that do invite their 12 year olds point out the significance of including these young men as a part of the larger group. These churches give testimony of how much the young men look forward to their first men's meeting upon coming of age, and how significant it is that these young men see the older men studying and learning together. These churches base this decision to include the young men upon the Old Testament tradition of coming of age (see Luke 2:42).

One other aspect on men's training that was discovered among some of the churches takes place on a much smaller scale. Five of the churches conduct even more intimate meetings. Different churches have different names for these groups. Some have

called them Iron Man groups, and others simply accountability groups or shepherding groups. They happen in two ways. The first way is directed and led by the pastor or teaching elder. This type is most often referred to as shepherding. In the churches which participated in the study, the pastor would meet regularly with the men of the congregation on a one-on-one basis. Although the research did not indicate that the pastor met with all of the men as regularly as he did with some, every intention appeared to be given to meet with the men on an individual basis. The researcher did not have the opportunity to observe one of these meetings, but the level of intimacy appears to be such that the pastor and the man are on the heart level.

For the churches that do not have shepherding groups but have accountability type groups, these have the same type of structure, but instead of the pastor meeting with all the men, the men met with each other one-on-one. One individual indicated that, having never been on a heart level with another man before, it took about 2 years to get used to before being able to freely open up and share what exactly is happening in their lives. When asked how these groups were structured, the responses did not indicate a systematic means by which to get men to start meeting. The suggestion was made that if the pastor or elders discovered a man was not meeting with anyone, instead of assigning a man to him, they would ask why he was not meeting with another man.

Although not every church indicated a formal process, one church in particular did share that when the men met together, there was a list of standard questions which they asked each other. These questions caused the individual to reflect on his daily walk with his wife, his family, at work, and in his own personal time. This church did indicate that the questions were used only if the men were reluctant to start talking about these

issues on their own. In regard to the timing of these meetings, one man in particular responded that they made every attempt to conserve time and that he and his group met before work at a local coffee shop.

Protect the Schedule of the Home

A concern that many of the churches raised was how busy families tend to be combined with the need for families to be together in order to spend time together. Nine churches indicated specific, intentional efforts to protect the family's schedule. For some churches this is accomplished by shutting down the church building after a certain time on Sundays, sending the message that the people should not be at church all day, but need to be with their families. Other churches are intentional to not schedule any meetings at the church that will not be over by 6:00 pm in order to allow families to eat dinner together. Some churches do nothing outside of the Sunday morning service, and others keep the midweek events to a minimum.

This is not to say that the churches do not plan, organize, and participate in events outside of the Sunday morning service. Many of the churches which participated in the study have midweek events that take place either in the church building or in the homes of the congregation. The men's meetings and parent trainings mentioned above would be examples of this; the home groups, which will be discussed below, are another example of churches meeting during the week, but with a desire to protect the family in this case. Some of the churches schedule the men's meetings at times which would be conducive to being out of the house. One church schedules the men's meetings for Sunday mornings, once a month, before the regular events of the day begin. Another church schedules these meetings early on the first Saturday of every month in order to

meet and return home before the events of the weekend truly begin.

A few exceptions to this rule do exist. Some of the meetings occur during the week. Some of the more academic trainings take place at night, when it would seem more conducive to be at home with the family. The churches which conduct these meetings and trainings at night appear to handle this situation with two specific and intentional practices to subvert the separation of the family. The first is that these churches do take breaks from the schedule. These churches will only plan the trainings to last so many weeks before they will take a scheduled break or achieve full completion of the course of study. The second intentional practice is that these trainings are the only other event the parents have on their schedule from the church. That is to say that the parents are not attending the trainings one night as well as other scheduled church events throughout the week.

The churches which participated in the study, and also practice the act of protecting the schedule, had a clear understanding of why they did not schedule events during the important times of the day. These churches do not plan according to when they will get the most attendees, or what the traffic patterns will be like in order to make the commute as easy as possible. The churches were clear to indicate that “dinner time is family time.” Two of the churches, one a family-integrated church and another, a family-equipping church, said it in those exact words. A third church takes the position that they need to be careful about scheduling functions during dinner time so that the father’s can be at home with their families.

One other way in which the churches take care to protect the schedule of the families can be viewed more from the perspective that if the church is going to call on the

families to do something during the week, the church is going to call on the families to be together during the function. One of the interviewees said that during the weekly meeting of the church staff, when discussing the events on the calendar, the driving question for the implementation of the event is “how does this help families?” This question is most often asked by the pastor, himself.

Home Groups

Quite a few of the churches have instituted what they refer to as home groups or life groups. These groups are not typical small groups where the youth meet in one location and the parents meet in another while the senior adults still another. The distinctive with these groups is that they are very intergenerational. Of the churches which identified these groups as part of what they do to train and equip parents, all but one explained that the groups are comprised of entire families meeting together for the duration of the time. The church that did not explain the group in this way, did explain that the groups are intergenerational for the purpose of establishing natural environments to promote older to younger mentoring.

Of the churches that identified this practice, the majority had organized the groups to meet in homes. The groups tend to be comprised of 4 to 5 families which meet on a weekly basis in different homes. In a few of the churches the homes in which the groups meet rotate so that the homeowners can have a break once in a while. One church takes a break from the schedule the first week of every month allowing the families and homeowners some downtime from the regular schedule. In another church, every seventh week the groups meet corporately at the church building for the same reason—to give the homeowners a break. Although most of the meetings take place in homes, one church

utilizes the space of their church building in order to alleviate any pressure on the congregation to open up their homes. This church still has the various groups, meeting as whole families, in different parts of the building. When pressed, the pastor did suggest that he might like to see the meetings take place in the homes of his congregants, but did not necessarily indicate any move towards that in the near future. This church includes as part of its meeting food for fellowship.

Some of the groups meet during the dinner hour bringing whole families together to fellowship over the meal, and others meet after the dinner hour in order to give families time to eat together before the group meets. Even within the same church, different groups will meet at different times depending on the group's consensus. The church that utilizes its building does include the meal time, with every group in the building providing for themselves wherever they meet in the building. Even for those groups that do not meet over the dinner hour, fellowship is an important part of the evening and is often experienced after the time of teaching and sharing. For most of these groups the fellowship includes a small dessert or snack.

Based on the researcher's observations, the groups that include the meal as part of the gathering time had a closer community than the groups that did not have a meal before the meeting time. This may be due in part to the relaxed atmosphere the meal time brings to the group, the time of settling that this allows before opening the Word, or it may not have any significance whatsoever. In defense of those groups which do not begin with the meal, the fellowship time at the end was just as relaxed as the mealtime at the beginning. The researcher did not observe any home group that did not enjoy fellowship either at the beginning or the end of the meeting. It was observed, however, that those

groups which began with a meal more readily moved into the time of teaching and sharing unencumbered with very little inhibitions to share, answer questions, and speak to the lesson being taught.

Although the structure of the meeting time could vary from group to group and church to church, the groups tend to follow a very similar structure, meals and fellowship time aside. Each group observed by the researcher began with a time of singing, which was followed by a time of sharing and then a time of teaching. The sharing and teaching were, at times, connected to the sermon from the previous Sunday, although this was not always the case. Certain groups would do a book study and other groups felt free to work through a video series. For some groups, the pastor would ask, from time-to-time, that all the groups study one thing in particular that he may be preaching from the pulpit or moving the entire congregation towards.

As mentioned in the opening of this section, each church must do what is best for its context, culture, and established norms. One church in particular noted that the practice of including the children in the same room as the adults during the singing, sharing, and teaching time was a fairly new practice for them. They said that once they began to include the children, the other groups from the church began to do the same. For this church, before including the children in the group with the adults, they would hire babysitters to watch the children while the adults met. Now this church has all children, of all ages, in the same room as the adults, learning and playing at the feet of their parents. This church moved into this practice, they did not begin to meet this way. Other churches practice much the same; the children of all ages are in the room, playing, coloring, building, yet learning at the feet of their parents. It is significant to point out

that the teachers include the children in the lesson. Sometimes this is achieved through asking the children probing questions or questions regarding the lesson. At other times this is asking the child to read Scripture. The children are not just present, they are actively involved in the group dynamics.

It is with this same heart and mind that many of the churches that were interviewed discussed the lack of a children's worship hour during the regular Sunday service. The churches which mentioned the practice of including the children in the home group setting and the congregational setting all suggested that they do so with the same heart—children need to be with their parents when worshiping and learning.

No Children's Church/Integrated Worship

Ten of the 12 churches that participated in the interviews do not have a children's worship during the sermon portion of the service. Some of the churches do have nursery available for children up to a certain age, but this is more often only available during the sermon, and not during any other portion of the service. Even with the availability of the nursery, most of the churches encourage the parents to keep the children in the service as soon as they are able. At one church in particular, when the pastor announces the time for children to be taken to the nursery, he also exhorts those parents who can, to keep their children in the service even if they fit the age requirements of the nursery. The nursery is intended more so for the visitor or the ornery child that is having a bad day. The concern over the parents being able to focus and get as much out of the sermon as possible is replaced by the joy and importance of having the children in the service learning at the feet of their parents.

Among the participating churches which implement this practice, the reasoning

behind the practice is consistent from church to church. The desire of the church leadership, and even that of the congregation, is to have the children with their families while worshiping. For most of the churches this is derived from a desire to set a pattern in the lives of the children that they receive their instruction under the guidance and authority of the parents. One pastor stated that the practice of entire families worshiping together on Sunday is an effort to encourage families to worship together elsewhere, too. Another pastor made it clear that the practice of children worshiping and learning along side of their parents is essential for natural assimilation. This pastor made the point that “nothing can take the place of the child seeing daddy worship Jesus.”

It is important to keep in mind that most of these churches do offer a nursery for those who need one. Even those churches which do not offer a formal nursery, there is a room available in the back of the sanctuary that parents may use when necessary for behavioral issues or mothers may use for times of feeding. For the churches which do have a nursery, some of these churches have established age cut-off's. One church has set the cut-off age at 3 years of age, another at age 4, and another at age 5. There does not appear to be any necessary rhyme or reason to the ages selected beyond the notion that by these ages the children should be able to sit and quietly learn during the length of the service.

Something needs to be said about the quietness factor. None of the churches that implement this practice suggest that the children are to sit up straight with their hands folded and their eyes on the preacher. For almost all of the churches it was quite the opposite. The churches which have the children in the service seem to understand that the children are children. Some of the churches admit that the children color and draw

throughout the sermon, or play on the floor at the feet of their parents. These churches also have grown used to the constant noise that some may be concerned with when picturing all these young children in the same room. When a child begins to get out of hand, or create excessive noise, if the direction of the parents does not correct the situation, most parents will walk out with the child or at least to the back of the sanctuary where the distraction would be minimized.

The practice of home groups meeting together with full families and the practice of children worshiping and learning next to their parents during the Sunday morning service are two examples of integration that many of the churches practice, even if they do not consider themselves a family-integrated church. The hospitality and fellowship practices would be another practice that reflects the concept of integration, but also appears to be a significant practice that many of the churches overwhelmingly had in common.

Hospitality and Fellowship

A handful of the churches practice some level of hospitality and fellowship in addition to the hospitality and fellowship that take place at the home groups. One of the questions that the researcher asked during the interview, whenever the opportunity arose, was if the pastor or leadership of the church ever visited the families in their homes. Although the researcher was often asking the question in regard to the pastor or leadership visiting the families for the sake of instruction and exhortation in conducting family discipleship, the positive responses returned by the interviewees to the researcher were always in regard to fellowshipping in each others home, not for the sake of correction, instruction, or discipline.

The fellowship, however, does not just take place in the homes of the congregation. In some cases the fellowship may be a meal after the Sunday service. A couple of the churches have a meal after the Sunday service every week, and others have a fellowship meal only once a month. For the fellowship meals that occur at the church following the Sunday service most often the families brought their own meals, for their own families, and sat together with other families. Some churches structure these meals to be more of a pot luck style with families bringing something to share. And one church in particular provides the meal for the congregation once a month.

Most of the churches do not have a set structure to the designated time, but encourage the free flow of fellowship amongst the families that are eating together. One church which has a meal every Sunday indicated that, for the most part, the fellowship continues for most of the day. The families will, after eating, proceed outside and the adults visit while the children play. For this church, there are no other activities throughout the week where the families get together, so they take advantage of the time they do have to visit and fellowship. A second church, which meets together for the Sunday service in the afternoon, provides an evening meal, and the interviewees indicated that many of the people will stay late into the evening even after the pastor himself has left the building.

One church in particular provides the congregation with a hymn of the month, that the parents are encouraged to sing at home with their families, and with a Scripture memory plan that parents are expected to utilize at home with their families (see take-homes section above). When this congregation gathers together once a month for their evening meal of fellowship, they also use this time to sing the hymn of the month

corporately, and open the door of opportunity to allow those who wish to recite their memory verses for the group to do so.

Another church that participated in the interviews holds regular luncheons which this pastor referred to as “equipping luncheons.” These luncheons are designed for parents to receive training in various topics that have either been a part of the regular teaching or are intentional based on the needs of the church. These luncheons are structured to include older adults that serve as mentors either throughout the luncheon itself, or continuing in a closer relationship. Sometimes these luncheons will consist of older adults speaking about their own experience or exhorting the parents in some significant way.

Preaching and the Power of the Pulpit Ministry

Although this section appears last in the list of practices which the participating churches had in common, the practice of preaching was quite often one of the first practices that the interviewees mentioned during the interview. Of the 12 churches which were interviewed, 4 specifically mentioned using “expository preaching” as a primary means of instructing parents on their roles as primary disciplers. Six other churches mentioned the significance of preaching, teaching from the pulpit, or the message in general, and the remaining 2 churches may not have thought to answer the researchers question in this manner because those churches were represented by individuals who were not preaching pastors.

The term expository preaching tends to be an elusive term that some preachers misunderstand, misinterpret, or have been alternatively instructed to practice. Graeme Goldsworthy, from Moore Theological College, calls it an “elastic” term (Goldsworthy

2000, 119). According to Warren Wiersbe, distinguished professor of preaching at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, biblical preaching is “a form of human verbal communication that involves the organized explanation and application of biblical truth, presented in a manner that is reasonable, imaginative, and intrinsic to the text. . . . It’s the preacher’s task to explain and apply the truth of that text to those who hear or read the sermon” (Wiersbe 1994, 304-05). Haddon Robinson, professor of preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary defines expository preaching as “the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers” (Robinson 2001, 21). Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix define an expository sermon as “a discourse that expounds a passage of Scripture, organizes it around a central theme and main divisions which issue forth from the given text, and then decisively applies its message to the listeners” (Vines and Shaddix 1999, 29).

Upon request of the researcher, two of the four pastors who specifically mentioned expository preaching provided definitions. One of the definitions stated that “Expository preaching exposes the text and what the writer said and why he said it, connects that with a contemporary audience for the purpose of transformation rather than information, and does all for the glory of God.” This same pastor went on to say that the best way to practice expository preaching is by “working” through a book of the Bible. The second pastor who submitted a definition at the request of the researcher said that it is essentially “proclaiming the Word of God.” He went on to say that for his church this was best accomplished by preaching through books of the Bible, highlighting the

commandments of the Lord, and offering ways to apply the text to the lives of the people. So it appears, even with all of its elasticity, that the basic practice according to the scholars and practitioners is to take the truth of a text and connect it to the people listening. For the practitioners this seems best done verse by verse, through a book of the Bible.

The significance in expository preaching can best be seen in the connection to the home discipleship practices. As much as the families do perform other practices with their children, if the parents see the pastor taking a Scripture passage and then expounding on that text, the parents have modeled for them a practice which can be conducted in the home. Expository preaching, then, is not only transformational for the individual in the pew, but carries the propensity to be transformational in the home.

More than one of the churches that participated in the study encourage the men of the congregation to not only be teachers of the Word in their home, but also teachers of the Word to their peers. One church is currently training 13 of the men how to be Bible teachers. Another church regularly models for its men how to take the Scripture and teach it in a home group. Another church simply sets the expectations high by assigning men dates to teach. With this latter church, the group is often working through a book of the Bible and therefore the content of what to teach is typically chosen for them.

In Table 12 the 7 practices are displayed with the various churches. A “Yes” indicates that the does participate in the listed practice. If nothing is noted, then the church did not indicate any participation in the practice. In the Men’s Training column, those churches with an asterisk did not claim to practice strictly men’s training, but practiced a broader parents training. Those churches with an asterisk in the Home Group

column did not meet in homes, but gathered at various locations to meet in the same manner that the home groups did. The churches marked with an asterisk in the Pulpit Ministry column specifically said expository preaching. It is interesting to observe the high number of practices of those churches with the higher scores as opposed to the low number of practices of those churches with the lower scores.

Table 12: Seven distinct practices

	Take-Home	Men's Training	Protect Schedule	Home Group	Integrated Worship	Hospitality Fellowship	Pulpit Ministry
Church A – FIC		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Church B – FEM	Yes	Yes*	Yes		Yes		Yes
Church C – FEM		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Church D – FIC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Church E – FBM					Yes		
Church F – FIC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Church G – FEM	Yes	Yes*	Yes				Yes
Church H – FEM	Yes	Yes*					
Church I – FIC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Church J – FIC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Church K – FEM	Yes	Yes*		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Church L – FIC		Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes*

Findings and Displays: Qualitative Case Studies

This section will report the findings from the second stage of Phase 2 of the

research study. This phase of the study addressed research questions 2, 3, and 4. The information will be reported through the use of explanation and narrative. Although the information is presented in a specific order, this does not in any way suggest a specific rank or intended structure to the information presented. In an effort to protect the anonymity of the individuals and churches taking part in the study, names and geographical locations have been omitted to protect those individuals who have been promised anonymity. For this reason, quotations will not be referenced if derived from any of the interview material whether written or spoken. This section will address some of the practices which were identified in the interview stage of the research and place them in the context of the church setting. The researcher will also strive to identify the attitude and daily efforts given to family ministry within these three churches.

The researcher conducted 3 total case studies. Two of these case studies were conducted in person, and the third case study was conducted in absentee. For the first case study, the researcher took his family with him in order to best experience the integration of a family into the context of the family ministry model. This visit was a week long visit which included a Sunday service, multiple home groups, and individual interviews with church leaders and lay people. The second case study was attended by just the researcher himself, and consisted of a Sunday service, observations of family devotions in multiple homes, and interviews and meetings with church leaders and lay people. The third case study was an artifact case study. In addition to more phone interviews with the pastoral staff, the researcher requested pertinent documentation from this church in order to further investigate the various daily operations and inner workings of the church as a whole.

The case studies revealed some specific common attributes about the churches which participated in the case studies. Through observation and participation, the researcher was able to examine these attributes more closely, and within various families in each of the churches. The researcher noticed that behind all the practices mentioned above, that each congregation had a heart that yearned to develop these practices into a personal part of their daily lives. Aligned with that desire was an effort to be obedient to Scripture as they understand Scripture. By striving for obedience to the Word, the families made daily efforts to live out the teaching that was growing in their hearts. And the families of these churches had a common focus.

The Heart of the People

It became quite clear through the case studies that the most significant aspect to the success of the practices in these churches was the standard that the pastor and elders set in their own homes. In hind sight, much the same could be said of the churches which participated through the interviews only. An important distinction that needs to be made is the difference between the ability of the congregation to simply hear the pastor and elders talk about what they did in their own homes and the significance of being able to see it walked out. Hence, the possible significance between the smaller and larger churches in regard to mean scores (Table 9, above). For all three of the case studies, each of the pastors shared that the efforts towards anything that they did for their church in regard to family discipleship, began with their desire to see their own family drawn closer to the gospel.

For the most part, this had a trickle down effect as the heart of the pastor was revealed to the heart of the people. When pressed, more than one individual at the various

churches indicated that certain people visit the church and never join, or do not stay long because they do not fit into the context of the church. Various individuals concluded with the researcher that the reason most of the people do not stay or never join is due in part to the amount of work family discipleship requires.

None of the churches case studied suggested that what they do is easy or any less work than what other churches might do. In fact, they often concluded quite the opposite. One of the questions the researcher asked, as opportunity provided, was why do the families do what they do? Overwhelmingly, the response was two fold. The first was that they did not receive discipleship growing up, and they regret the struggles they went through. The second was that they wanted their child(ren) to learn about the gospel message and how to interact with the world through the eyes of Scripture.

One congregation has been transitioning to the family integrated congregation that they are today for the past 7 years. When questioned about the history of the shift, person after person responded that they had a yearning for something more for their families. This church moved out of a traditional style church where they had youth group and Sunday school. Two of the previous youth leaders are still a part of the congregation today.

The Daily Walk

A significant characteristic which the researcher observed was the amount of effort given to daily live out the truths and practices that were being taught. This was best illustrated by the manner in which the children and youth conducted themselves. The youth were active participants in the home groups, they were actively involved in the family devotions, and they appeared to have an active quiet time with the Lord

themselves. These youth were taking notes during the sermons, and pulling these notes out for reference either when the parents discussed the sermon in the family devotions or the home group leader began the time of teaching in regard to the sermon. During the discussion time, not only were the youth and children asked questions directly, they readily volunteered to answer questions, even when not called upon.

One youth, when asked to pray, prayed Scripture without opening his Bible. Another began his response to a question from the home group leader by indicating he was deriving the answer from something he had read in Genesis that morning during his quiet time. Another child was quoting Scripture he had learned as part of a Bible quiz group. These children and youth were demonstrating that they were learning and paying attention, and they could recall the information from the sermon, Bible study, and personal quiet time.

A common question the researcher asked the various individuals that were a part of the case study process is, "What is the most significant aspect to this process for you." Some of the responses tended to be typical, but two in particular stood out to the researcher. The first response was given by a married woman who no longer has any children living at home. Her response to the question was that, "men are being trained, they are growing." The second response was from a teenager of one of the families in the church. Her response was that she could be friends with other youth that were not her same age. She expressed the joy in interacting with the various generations, even those that are not near hers.

Although a significant number of churches discussed expository preaching and the pulpit ministry as a key factor in what they do to equip and train parents, it was

refreshing to see how parenting was actually preached from the pulpit. The pastor was able to teach biblical principles through illustrations of his own family, while staying true to the text of the sermon. In his sermon he was transparent, revealing the faults of the week and the struggles of the household without revealing any embarrassing specifics.

A Common Focus

One characteristic that these churches shared was a common vision of what they desired for their families, how to get there, and the cost of the journey. All of the active families in these churches had a strong desire for their children to have a close walk with God. They all share the vision of their children being disciples of Christ. With that shared vision they have a shared commitment to the work necessary to reach the goal of household family discipleship. On quite a few occasions the researcher was told that what these families are doing is a lot of work. The task of household family discipleship requires more energy and time from the parents than some are willing to accept or give. Each church indicated that families will start to attend the church, but do not last very long because they are not able to commit to the time necessary to fulfill household family discipleship.

Summary of Research Question 2 Findings

Research question 2 asked, in what ways do churches teach parents their responsibility to disciple their own children. As discovered through the analysis of the interviews, and displayed above, a primary means of instruction is through the preaching and teaching from the pulpit. The pastors and teachers rely heavily on Scripture to communicate the responsibility parents have to disciple their children. This reliance on Scripture is not void of the pastor's responsibility to adequately and effectively

communicate the truths found within Scripture. Thus, the research indicates that with a proper understanding and execution of expository preaching, the church teaches the parents their responsibility to disciple their children. This is joined with the training that the men and parents receive at other times through the church functions mentioned above. The men receive instruction and exhortation through the men's meetings and parents in general are instructed through the functions designed for them.

The structure of the home groups would also tend to teach parents their responsibility to disciple their children. By the sheer fact that the design of the home groups is to bring entire families together, for the sake of instruction, should at least suggest, if not teach, that whole family instruction should take place inside of the home. This structure not only lends itself to teach responsibility, but also demonstrates a way for parents to fulfill their role as primary disciplers.

Summary of Research Question 3 Findings

Research question 3 asked in what ways churches train and support parents to fulfill their role as primary disciplers. Considering the seven practices listed above, it appears that all 7 common practices are ways in which churches train and support parents to fulfill their role as primary disciplers. Although the practices could be taken individually and may be taken individually in certain cases, the apparent most effective practices will be, at a minimum, a few of the practices in combination, depending on the church context, congregation culture, and established norms.

As was the case with some of the participating churches, geographical distances may prevent the midweek home groups from being feasible, while this same consideration would make the shutting down of the building an established norm. The 7

practices can be taken in whole or in part. They are, however, the means by which the participating churches train and support the parents to fulfill their role as primary disciplers.

Summary of Research Question 4 Findings

Research question 4 asked in what ways churches assess the effectiveness of training the parents to disciple their children. Some of the larger churches indicated that they send out surveys to the congregation in order to get a feel for how the church body is doing. And other larger churches utilize the trainings which were mentioned above in order to assess the climate of the church family. None of the smaller churches indicated that they use surveys or any other type of instrument, but instead they use personal relationships to assess the men on how things are going at home. Some of these personal relationships were mentioned above with the shepherding and accountability groups, but the churches also mentioned the home groups, the fellowship meals, and the time of hospitality as opportunities to candidly discuss with the men the events of the home.

It should be noted as a part of this summary what some of the expectations of the church are. Certain churches are rigid in their expectations of household family discipleship. Although it seems almost all would agree that the reading of Scripture is a good thing and a positive place to start, certain congregations hold that this is the only means to perform household family discipleship. Other churches were not as stringent in the methods that were used at home as long as the parents were engaging the children with the truths of Scripture. One family uses a book that essentially walks through the attributes of God by following the ABC's. Other families use similar tools to help guide the time of instruction. These families do not use these tools in lieu of Scripture, but use

them along side of Scripture. It was surprising to discover how few churches included or encouraged singing as a part of household discipleship. Of the 12 churches interviewed, only 1 church mentioned that singing was a part of the expectations or exhortations for what the family do when they gather together to for the instruction of the Lord.

A final part of assessment that the research uncovered was the assessment of the frequency of family devotions or worship. Some of the churches that participated in the study expected the parents to practice household family devotions twice a day. Other churches strongly encouraged daily, and still other churches were pleased with families doing “regular” family devotions.

The Two Flavors of the Family-Integrated Church

Throughout the interviews and the case studies with the churches that identified themselves as a family-integrated church, it became clear that there are two distinct types of family-integrated churches. One interviewee even described this distinction as “two flavors” of the family-integrated church. In the most basic of terms, the one flavor of family-integrated church is considered by the other flavor as more legalistic in its theology and practices. One individual detailed some of the practices that the first flavor of the family-integrated church practices for the researcher. Some of the differences between the two flavors include preferences in music. The second flavor of family-integrated church uses instruments such as drums and a bass guitar. While the first flavor may not allow women to speak or share during the service, the second freely invites women to share during the service. Most family-integrated churches do not have any form of family segmentation including nursery. The second flavor family-integrated church does have nursery even though parents are discouraged from using it regularly.

The second flavor of the family-integrated church was distinctive through the interview process in that they utilized more programming than the first flavor.

Although these churches would not necessarily call what they do “programs,” these churches do have functions where different age groups or established and felt needs groups will meet together. Some of these groups meet for just for a season and others for a more extended period of time. Some examples of these groups are college age men and women from the church gathering at someone’s home in order to study the Word. This program was put in place out of a felt need for this age group of individuals and this season of their life. Another example is a group of mom’s spent a summer reading and studying a specific Bible study together because of the interest of one of the girls. The marker that distinguishes this type of family-integrated church from a family-equipping church appears to be the flexibility of the programs and the initiating of the programs.

One church was asked to distinguish itself as a family-integrated church as opposed to a family-equipping church and the response was two-fold. First, the functions that they plan are most often for a short season. It is rare that they would last for more than a few weeks. Second, this church distinguished what they do from programs by suggesting that programs are organized by the church leadership and the congregation is expected to attend, while the functions that they participate in are organized from within the body with the full blessing of the church leadership. It appears to be a difference of the church leadership establishing programs, and the church body desiring to fellowship together. The basic distinction is where the equipping comes from. Does the equipping (programming) come from the elders, or does the equipping (programming) come from within the body?

This is significant to the present research in that the family-integrated church, as defined by the precedent literature, does not appear to be a fair or full scope analysis of the inner workings of all the churches that identify themselves as a family-integrated church. By no means is this to diminish the definition as it stands in the precedent literature, because this is in fact one “flavor” of the family-integrated church. Those churches which distinguished themselves as a second flavor of family-integrated church, however, were specific in their desire to be distinguished from those churches as defined by the precedent literature.

Another significant factor that needs to be considered with this information is the diagram that was used to demonstrate how the various models of family ministry interact with each other. Figure 7 below is a replica of Figure 2 from chapter 2 of this text. Note that it shows the family-integrated church not touching the family-based church. The model was previously designed in this manner to show a distinction between the two models of ministry. The first model indicates that the family-integrated church and the family-based church cannot have any commonalties directly with each other because of the approach of each model of church to the organization and establishment of programs.

Through the research process, however, it has become clear that the two circles in fact can overlap, because there are some second flavor family-integrated churches that do utilize what the researcher will call programs. Figure 8 represents the new figure where the circles do overlap. This revised diagram is still sufficient to display the various models of family ministry because there is latitude for those family-integrated churches which choose to utilize no programs to still exist in the portion of the circle that does not

overlap with the family-based model.

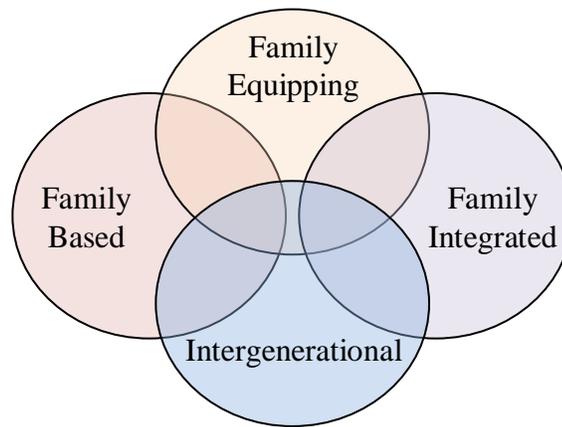


Figure 7: Family ministry models and methods

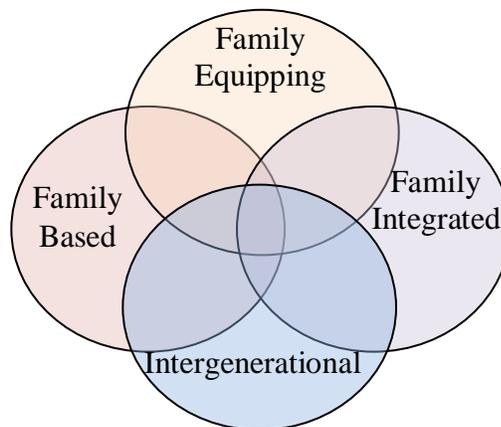


Figure 8: Family ministry models and methods (revised)

The research seems to indicate that the determining factor between which flavor of family-integrated church one is attending comes down to the preferences and the precepts. What some family-integrated churches consider preferences, other family-integrated churches consider precepts, and vice versa.

Table 13 below identifies the family-integrated church with its appropriate flavor. The churches marked with an asterisk (*) designator, identified themselves as distinct from the other family-integrated churches. The family-integrated churches without the designator may choose to be identified with one side or the other of the family-integrated church; only those that distinguished themselves through the research received the designator.

Table 13: Church rank, model, and FIC designator

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Church Model</i>
1	Church I	FIC
2	Church J	FIC
3	Church A	FIC*
4	Church C	FEM
5	Church L	FIC*
6	Church D	FIC
7	Church F	FIC*
8	Church K	FEM
9	Church B	FEM
10	Church G	FEM
11	Church E	FBC
12	Church H	FEM

Evaluation of the Research Design

This section will evaluate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the research design. As is the case with almost any research project, there is always room for improvement.

Strengths of the Research Design

A primary strength of the research design was the ability of the researcher to be presented with a narrow list of churches which are conducting family ministry well. The use of an expert panel quickly eliminated any church that may not espouse a family ministry approach, or at least not an approach to family ministry as defined by the researcher. This process also allowed for an objective suggestion by the expert panel to then be analyzed and verified through quantitative methods. Another strength in using an expert panel is that the researcher was able to receive a variety of churches that might not otherwise have been considered for the study in the first place. The list of churches did not represent a single denomination, demographic, or geographical region. Without the use of an expert panel, it is possible that the churches selected, or otherwise nominated, for the study would not have been as diverse.

The use of “parents” within the congregation strengthened the research above and beyond than if all members of the congregation had participated. The perceptions of parents within the congregation may differ from the perceptions of those who are not currently parents with children living at home. The quantitative measures used by the researcher allowed the parents to fairly and accurately evaluate the performance of their own church while possibly not even realizing they were evaluating the churches efforts. The quantitative phase also allowed the researcher to more accurately develop the

measures for the qualitative phase of the research.

Keeping the survey anonymous was an added strength for those parents who may not be fulfilling their roles as disciplers in the home. As much as they may be aware of their role, if they have not been faithful to fulfill that role, the anonymity of the survey allowed the respondent to be honest with the researcher as well as with themselves. An added strength in this regard is that the survey, simply through the line of questioning, may have offered some suggestion, encouragement, or conviction to the participant in regard to their own personal household discipleship practices.

The survey instrument itself was a strength to the research design, as well as the medium through which the instrument was completed. The Family Discipleship Perspectives and Practices Survey, as an established instrument with a Cronbach α of .88 for the first 8 items on the survey, proved to be invaluable to the completion of this research study. The instrument was concise with its questions, and worded in such a way that it got to the data that the study needed in order to answer the research questions. Hosting the survey through an online survey company was another strength to the survey design.

By utilizing an online hosting company, the participants were able to easily access and complete the survey according to their own time table and personal convenience. This medium also made the tabulation of data a simple process with the ability to filter out respondents who did not meet the eligibility criteria stated in the population section of Chapter 3. Through this medium the researcher was able to track the data daily and monitor the individual church results before closing the survey.

In addition to the instrument and the online hosting company, exploring the

best practices of the churches identified by the expert panel, the research demonstrates that there are specific practices which churches do in order to train their parents for household family discipleship. By exploring the various practices from each congregation, the researcher was able to identify those practices which were common to the group as a whole, and how those practices may be perceived and accomplished even with the varying church context, congregational culture, and established norms. Although the churches shared some specific demographics, the differences which they did not share showed no evidence of influencing the practices in any way.

Weaknesses of the Research Design

A primary weakness in the research design was the possibility of certain church congregations being excluded from the research due to an oversight on the panel's part, or the lack of exposure as a church espousing to perform or practice family ministry. This is not to suggest that the research was weakened, but rather that the research could have been further strengthened. Limiting the scope of the research to those churches nominated by the expert panel was necessary, but may have also excluded certain congregations which practice family ministry utilizing other practices not explored here. A similar weakness can be found in the use of an expert panel whose members may or may not hold denominational bias or preferential treatment to churches they are more familiar with. Although every effort was made to convene an expert panel that represented any number of backgrounds, various denominational preferences, and familiarity with the different family ministry models, the bias or preference of the individual panel member could have interfered.

The manner in which the expert panel was asked to submit the list of churches,

although functional, could have been improved. If the researcher were to repeat this study, the researcher would provide the expert panel with a link to an online survey instrument where they would be asked to list in a text box the names of the 1 to 3 churches that they nominate. This method may prevent some of the confusion that the panel experienced in regard to which churches had or had not been previously nominated for the study.

In this same regard, even though the online collection process was smooth and made the collection of data easy, for the most part, the researcher would make two adjustments to the design of the online survey. The online instrument asked respondents to write in the name and location of their church as the final question of the survey. This was strictly for categorical reasons. The weakness in this part of the design is that some respondents either abbreviated the church name or title, or even misspelled the name of the church where they attend most often. To prevent this confusion, and to make the filtering process easier on the researcher, instead of asking the respondent to type in the name of their church, the researcher would provide a drop down list of those churches participating, which the respondent could then click to choose the church where they attend most frequently. Again, this would assist the researcher in filtering the data, but would also make the response for that question slightly less tedious for the respondent.

The second adjustment that the researcher would make to the online instrument is to add a “N/A” option within the demographic data collection. Although certain questions, like “What is your gender?” would not need a “N/A” option, other questions may have benefitted from the inclusion of this choice simply because without this choice certain respondents may have felt inclined or forced to give an answer that fits them best

even though it does not necessarily reflect the exact response desired.

A weakness in the quantitative phase of the study was that the attitudes of the parents could not be measured. Although parents may perform certain household family discipleship practices on a regular basis, their attitude towards performing such practices could not be measured in the quantitative phase of the research. The same concern could be raised in regard to the children and youth of the families. What is the attitude of the recipients of the household practices? Although the qualitative case studies were able to briefly explore some of the attitudes of the parents and the youth, overall the survey instrument failed in this regard.

Along this same line of reasoning is the concern or impact of parental modeling and the value which it holds in the eyes of the child or children. Even though a parent may not be practicing household family discipleship on a regular basis, this parent may be a better model of the Christian life than a parent who is loyally practicing household family discipleship but lacks the Christian lifestyle. A sexual abuser, alcoholic, violent or quarrelsome parent, and so on may be practicing household family discipleship, but these other factors present in their life are not being considered by the research instrument like they may be considered by the child or recipient of the household family discipleship practices.

The qualitative phase of the research has its own weaknesses too. The researcher limited the phone interviews to 30 minutes as a courtesy to the interviewees. For some of the interviews, the 30 minutes was sufficient. For other interviews, the 30 minutes went by too fast. Although the researcher would offer to continue the conversation with the participants when it felt as though the interview could keep going,

the participant often could not due to the schedule of the rest of their day. An alternative to scheduling a longer interview that may not be necessary for all participants would be to schedule two 30 minute interviews a day or two apart from each other, giving the researcher time to formulate questions and further discussion based upon the first interview. At this point, the second interview could always be cancelled if the researcher deemed it unnecessary.

A second weakness in the qualitative phase of the research can be seen in the approach to the case studies. Although the case studies provided time for the researcher to briefly integrate with the congregation, the time was also very short. The researcher believes that the objective was met by conducting the case studies in the way they were conducted, but also recognizes the difference between observing the church for one week versus observing the church for an extended period of time.

A final weakness to note in the qualitative phase of the research is the inability of the researcher to experience the full and complete training of any particular church as it regards the best practices. Beyond the ability to further observe the church culture and context, this weakness is in regard to never being on the receiving end of what the church is doing on a regular basis. The research would be much stronger if time allowed for the full immersion of the researcher into the culture of the church to experience firsthand the practices of the church with the families in regard to the training of the saints.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This research study explored the best practices of select churches which have adequately trained the parents of the congregation to perform household family discipleship. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the significance of the findings, as well as the implications, for the research. Additionally, the applications of the research, as well as its limitations, will be considered.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this two-phase sequential mixed methods study was to explore the best practices for training parents to pursue household family discipleship among churches identified as having and implementing a family ministry philosophy and approach. This research used quantitative methods to measure the parents' perception and practices, and qualitative methods to explore the best practices of the churches.

Research Questions

The following questions directed the collection and analysis of the data for the research study.

1. To what degree, and in what ways, do parents perceive and practice family discipleship as a household parental responsibility?
2. In what ways have churches taught parents their responsibility to disciple their own children?
3. In what ways do churches train and support parents in the congregation to fulfill their role as primary disciplers?

4. In what ways do churches assess the effectiveness of training parents to disciple their children?

Research Implications

A basic assumption that this research functioned under is that those churches which are identified as being elite family ministry churches are in some way training the parents in the congregation. A logical deduction, then, is that through the training by the churches, the parents are then, in turn, performing certain disciplines, developing certain traits, or establishing certain patterns within their own home in order to disciple their children on a regular basis. The overarching question has not been so much what are the parents doing, but more so, what are churches doing, and how is that then reflected in the home?

The implications of this research for the contemporary church, as well as for the precedent literature, is that there is a way to establish a foundation of what appears to be the best practices for training and equipping parents for household family discipleship. Much of the precedent literature mentioned in this study suggests that there is a specific way to perform and conduct church in order to prepare parents for household family discipleship. This research demonstrates that based upon the specific practices explored here, that families are discipling their children at home. The research further suggests that the proper perception of the parent's role in family discipleship tends to lead to a higher frequency of those practices in the home. Considering the position of the precedent literature, this research further strengthens the work done by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton. Smith and Denton concluded that parents are the number one influencer in the lives of their children; this research provides a means by which parents

can take hold of that role and be assisted by the church to do so (Smith and Denton 2005, 261).

The precedent literature explored three established models of family ministry. Based upon the definitions of the researcher and the literature, the churches were examined through the lens of these three models. Two observations must be noted when considering the family ministry models, and the results that the research produced. First, all the churches, no matter what model the various churches identified with, demonstrated that the efforts of the church were being transferred to the parents and practiced in the home. The respondents returned data that demonstrate the parents perceive their role as primary disciplers and this perception leads to the increased frequency of specific discipleship practices. This is to say that, family ministry model aside, the churches are reaching the parents.

Second, however, is that the research cannot ignore the results in regard to those churches which returned the higher scores. Six of the top 7 churches identified themselves as a family-integrated church, with the seventh church indicating that the researchers definition of family-integrated church was too strict, thereby selecting family-equipping ministry model. According to the data, it does not matter which “flavor” of the family-integrated church one adheres to, the churches whose parents responded that they perceived their role as primary disciplers, and then practiced certain disciplines with higher frequency, were influenced by the family-integrated church they attended.

The research also seems to imply that the smaller the congregation the greater the impact the church will have on its parents. Considering the comparison between church rank and church size (Table 9), there is almost a one-to-one correlation between

the score rank and the church size rank. According to the qualitative interviews, the larger churches rely more heavily on the use of survey instruments to assess the parents on household family discipleship, while the smaller churches develop more close-knit relationships between the people in the pew and the people behind the pulpit.

With the overwhelming number of churches that incorporate some level of men's training, the research seems to suggest that this is one extremely successful avenue to establish the relationships necessary to connect the church and the home. This connection must be supported in both locations, however. At the church, children need to worship and learn with their parents. They need to be in the service, sitting under the same instruction as the mother and father, for the purpose of consistency and continuity in the instruction at home. The home needs to have consistent times of devotion or worship. The connection between the church and home will be lost if the home does not institute the times of instruction and reflection on the lesson and learning from church. One way in which many of the churches accomplish this is by providing take-homes for the parents and children. The use of take-homes allows for a more natural connection to the activities and lessons at church to the lessons and activities at home.

For some of the scholars and authors who have contributed to the literature, a basic shift in pragmatics is in order. As the research demonstrates, some scholars and authors who believe they are promoting and performing family discipleship, in fact, are not. This is not to say that their intentions have been deceitful nor have their efforts been without merit. But uninformed, the scholars and authors proceed to establish change to an already impaired system without asking the questions, "What works?" and "What is biblical?" The scholars and authors, by introducing a method or manner in which to do

family discipleship, absent from actually bringing the families together, are not addressing the need where it lies.

Research Applications

Amidst all the specific practices that the participating churches incorporate, these practices appear to be driven by one purpose. These churches desire to make a difference in the lives of the families within the church for the sake of the kingdom of God. Not once, in all the research, did someone suggest that what the participating church does is for the sake of retention rates. The churches, and the families alike, appear to have a desire to reach the families for the sake of the gospel. As this research is potentially applied to the seminary classroom, pastors conferences, and individual churches, one cannot lose sight of the purpose behind these practices. For the individual, the purpose must begin by answering the question, “What do I want to accomplish?” If the answer is stronger men in order to develop stronger families for the sake of a stronger church, then consider the practices explored by this research.

One individual, during one of the participating church interviews, suggested that strong families lead to a strong church, a strong church leads to strong fathers, and strong fathers lead to strong families. The researcher has developed the diagram below (Figure 9) to better demonstrate what this individual was suggesting.

As one can see in the diagram, the one strength should naturally lead to the next strength. The strengths were not placed on a continuum, as though a church may arrive at the final strength at some point. The cyclical nature of the diagram is very purposeful, suggesting that the process is on-going. The fathers will need constant and

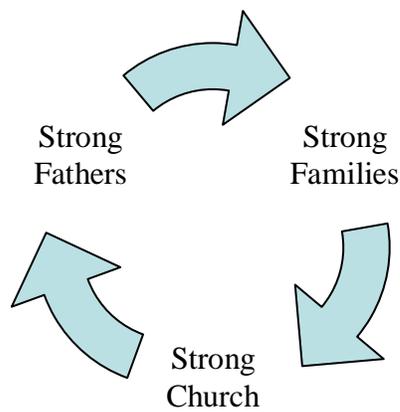


Figure 9: The strength cycle

consistent strengthening, which will lead to constant and consistent strengthening of the families, and so on to the church. The cycle should not end, but should always be strengthening itself. This concept can be seen throughout the research as churches took efforts to reach out to the fathers of the church, and more generally, the parents. The reaching out to strengthen the men was a direct effort to equip and train the men to go home and strengthen their families. And the strength of the families will lend itself to the strength of the church. Although not every congregation stated their efforts in this way, the model above can easily be applied to almost any of the congregations that took part in the research.

Another way to look at the strength cycle is to consider that instead of one strength necessarily leading to another, that the strengths actually coexist together while maintaining a certain amount of individuality. Some churches may prefer this next diagram rather than the previous diagram. The first diagram suggests that as much as the

strengths lead towards each other, they exist in isolation of each other. This second diagram demonstrates that the strengths do maintain a certain level of isolation yet the strengths also share and support the others at times. Figure 10 demonstrates what this may look like if a church felt that the above diagram was too exclusive.

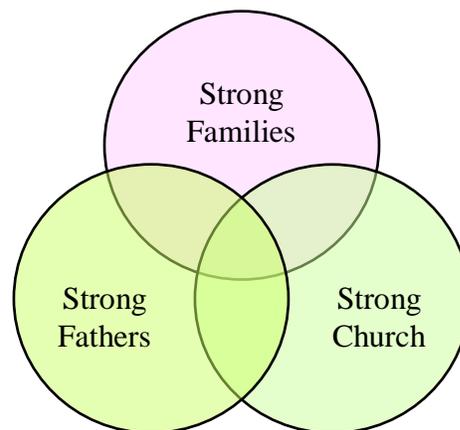


Figure 10: Strength coexistence model

Notice in this diagram how the strengths overlap with each other, yet they are not necessarily dependent on the former strength to lead to the next strength. This diagram suggests that the individual strengths can co-exist with the others, or independently exist each from the others. The characteristics that the strengths share, those where the circles overlap, would be best realized when the congregation gathers corporately. Yet, the strength of the fathers and families may individually be realized in an accountability group away from the greater church congregation. The strength of the fathers and the church may be realized together at the annual men's retreat, while away

from their families, yet the strength of the families and the church may be realized as they gather for home groups. The strength of the father may stand by itself while at work or on a business trip, and the strength of the family may best be expressed when visiting with extended family and friends who are non-believers. With this diagram the strengths have the freedom of independence, and yet they have the privilege to share the strengths, one with the other.

Both of these models, however, are inadequate to describe exactly what the research demonstrates. They both hold their individual truths, but do not best represent the full effect of what the churches are doing for the kingdom of God. Figure 11 represents what the researcher has determined to be the result of the best practices of the churches which espouse to hold to a family ministry philosophy and approach.

The strengths do not just lead from one to the other, they also exist together for each other. Figure 11 demonstrates the cyclical nature that is necessary for the fathers, families, and churches to continually be strengthened one by the other. At the same time, Figure 11 indicates that these strengths should co-exist while also maintaining a certain level of individuality. What the interviewee said, strong fathers lead to strong families, which lead to strong churches, and so on is completely true. But these entities also exist outside of each other, while not forsaking a certain level of interdependence. The practices that the research explored are designed to strengthen one of these three; fathers, families, or church, but not without being cognizant of the other two.

In order for this research to best be applied in the seminary classroom, there will need to be a shift in the approach to the current curriculum. Expository preaching is a central task and skill of the preacher. This fact has not just been uncovered by this

research. Seminaries and scholars have been aware of this for many years. Churches have

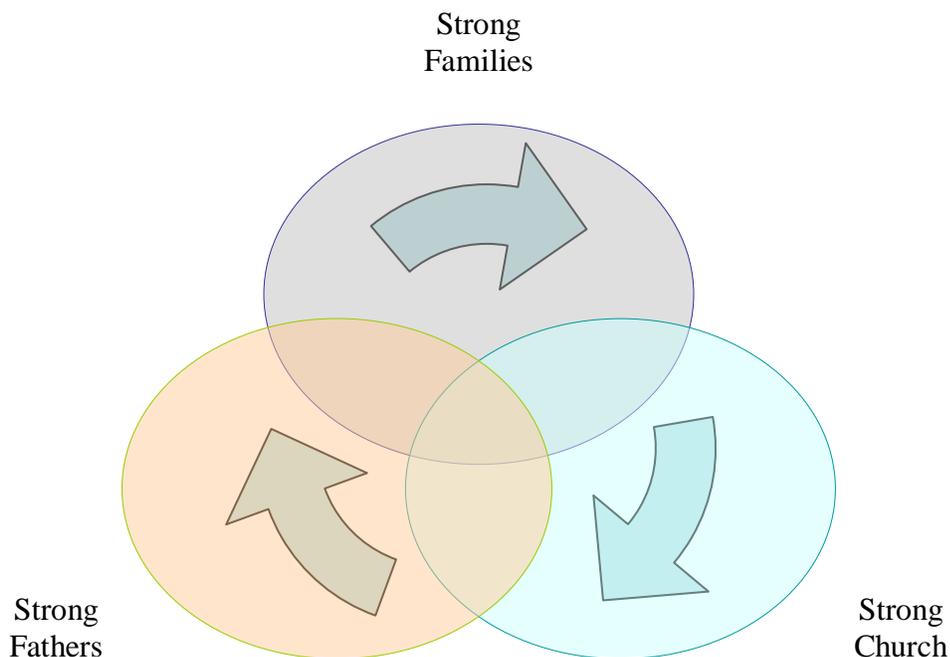


Figure 11: Strength and existence model

been utilizing segmented small groups for a number of decades now. This concept is not new to the church. There is a running joke about Baptists and their covered dishes, hospitality and fellowship are not new to evangelical Christendom. And the list goes on.

The practices explored in this research are not in and of themselves brand new to academia, scholarship, or the church. The shift in the curriculum of the seminary would not benefit strictly from a text that draws light to these practices. The shift must come in the application of these practices. Although a few exceptions do exist, the underlying key to the success of the practices explored here, in light of the strength and existence model (Figure 11), is that the age-segmented programs in the participating churches are minimized, and more events which include entire families are maximized.

That being said, the seminaries would need to draw closer attention, and set a higher expectation, to the need to integrate families into the various programs that may already be in place. In regard to the established norms of a church context and culture, it is not a matter of stripping, but of restructuring. Seminary students would need to learn how to work within the established norms of the congregation they are already a part of, or will become a part of, in order to draw families together in and out of the church building while providing tools to connect the church and home. The application that will result from the establishment of a core group of best practices will be realized when more and more churches incorporate the practices into their own congregation.

Research Limitations

In the quantitative phase of the study, research was limited to the objective responses provided by the parents. Additionally, the research was limited in that the respondents' attitude could not be analyzed. Since the survey was completed by parents, the generalization of the findings do not include the responses of any of the youth or their perceived effectiveness of the churches efforts or the parent's efforts in the household family discipleship practices. A final limitation is that the research only explored the parents of those churches identified by the expert panel as churches espousing an effective family ministry approach.

This limitation is significant to consider when reviewing the various practices listed above. The list of practices cannot be considered to be a complete list of practices. Other evangelical churches which espouse to perform family ministry, may also do so well, and could possibly have additional practices which they would consider significant to the practice of family ministry.

In the qualitative phase of the study, the research was also limited to those churches which have been identified by the expert panel as a church espousing an effective family ministry approach. The qualitative research was further limited by the observations of the researcher as it pertains to the documents reviewed, interviews conducted, and any observable church culture dynamics. This research does not provide a longitudinal observation of the process of training or embedding in the culture of the church.

Further Research

Considerations for further research include performing a longitudinal study to more closely examine the extended process of training which a church regularly performs with the families as the children travel through the life-span. With the brevity of the researcher's time at each case study, a longitudinal study would also allow the researcher to more closely consider the coming and going of families that do not, or choose not to adhere to the training process of the various churches. Additionally, the research may benefit from studying the youth of these families to examine the effectiveness of the training and the practices being performed in the home. Are the practices proving effective for multi-generational faithfulness?

It is interesting to note that 7 of the churches in the research study had a high population of families that home-school their children. This is not to say that every family in these churches home-schooled, but a significant number of the families did. The researcher did not conclude this to be a practice which the churches utilize for the training of the parents, because too often the response the researcher received from the pastors, elders, and parents was that they did not require or expect the families of the

congregation to home-school over an alternative method of education. Although 2 of the churches appeared to be more adamant about the need to home-school over any other type of education, the researcher concluded that this was not a practice of the church, but instead a practice of the people. That said, it would be interesting to further study the impact or correlation of home-schooling in the discipleship process. The study may be designed in a similar manner to this study where congregations are nominated based on the home-schooling practices of the parents, and their family discipleship is gauged using the same instrument in this research study, and finally a case study could be conducted where closer observation could lead to more conclusive information regarding the decision to home-school, the impact of home-schooling on the discipleship process, and the involvement of the church body in the process.

One of the churches case studied, and a few of the churches interviewed, were churches that had transitioned from one type of church to how they currently exist. Although some information was gathered on how a church might transition into a church which practices household family discipleship, it was not the intended purpose of this research to explore that process. A possible question that a church may raise is how they might transform their church culture to develop the best practices within their current, possibly turbulent, church culture. Further research in the steps necessary to establish these practices or case studies of churches which have established these practices through transforming a congregation may be beneficial to the general church community seeking to implement these best practices in their own congregations.

A final consideration for further research would be to evaluate the homes with single parents, especially single mothers. The research here suggests that a strong father

will lead to a strong family which will lead to a strong church. But what about those homes where there is no father that still demonstrate regular devotional practices and family discipleship? Although this research considers the ideal home with a mother and a father, too many churches are faced with the reality that too many homes do not fit the ideal and still must consider what practices may best equip the less than ideal situations.

APPENDIX 1
EXPERT PANEL

1. Wesley Black
2. Henry Reyenga
3. Brian Haynes
4. Richard Ross
5. Scott Brown
6. Jay Strother
7. Brandon Shields
8. Eric Wallace
9. Steve Wright

APPENDIX 2

EXPERT PANEL E-MAIL REQUEST

Dear friend in the faith.

My name is W. Ryan Steenburg. I am a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. I am currently pursuing research that focuses on family ministry in the local church. You have been identified as an individual with expertise in the area of family ministry. I am writing to request your participation in the study simply by supplying a list of at least one (1) and no more than three (3) churches which you feel are conducting family ministry based upon the definition below. Please think outside of your own congregation and denomination as well. I will consider your reply to this email with a list of church(es) as consent to participate, and you will receive nominal credit for your participation. Anonymity will be granted to those individuals requesting it in the reply email. I am not asking you to contact any of these churches nor to do any research on your own to discover these churches. All I ask is that based upon your expertise which one (1) to three (3) churches come to your mind as churches conducting family ministry as it is reflected in the definition below. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please reply by November 3, 2010. Negative replies are welcome and desired.

By His Grace & For His Glory,

W. Ryan Steenburg

Family Ministry: The process of intentionally and persistently aligning a congregation's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children (adapted from Jones 2009, 40).

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. The researcher contacted the churches by phone requesting a scheduled interview with the senior pastor and/or the individual primarily in charge of implementing family ministry.
2. When the researcher called on the scheduled day and time, the researcher introduced himself and explained the purpose of the research as well as how this specific church was nominated.
3. The researcher reassured the interviewees of personal as well as church anonymity. The researcher guaranteed that every effort will be taken in order to ensure that no regional or geographical information is shared throughout the reporting of the findings that would jeopardize said anonymity.
4. The researcher informed the interview participants that for the sake of the research, the interview was to be tape recorded, and the researcher sought their permission to do so.
5. The researcher proceeded with the first two interview questions, pending the interviewees questions or concerns.
6. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher thanked the interviewees for their time and assistance.

APPENDIX 4

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following interview questions served as a guide for the interviews. These questions were not necessarily the precise questions asked, neither were all the questions listed here included in every interview. These questions served as the primary questions with additional follow-up questions derived from the interviewees response to previous questions. The first two questions were asked of every church during the interview process. Most interviews were able to run the course with the follow-up questions derived from the response to question 2.

1. Based upon the following definitions, what model of family ministry does your church identify with the most?
 - a. Family-Based: “Family-based churches retain separate, age-segmented ministry structures. ... family based churches intentionally include intergenerational and family-focused events in each ministry” (Shields 2009, 100).
 - b. Family-Equipping: “Family-equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children” (Strother 2009, 144).
 - c. Family-Integrated: “The [family-integrated] church eliminates age-segregated programs and events. All or nearly all programs and events are multigenerational, with a strong focus on parents’ responsibility to evangelize and to disciple their own children” (Jones 2009, 52).
2. What, if any, steps has the church leadership taken to train the parents of the congregation to perform household family discipleship?
3. What, if any, events or programs are utilized to champion the parents in their role as disciple-makers?

4. What, if any, measures are taken to ensure that parents are discipling their children at home?
5. How often does the pastor preach on or exhort parents to train their children in the Lord from the pulpit?
6. How often does someone from your church leadership make a home visit to encourage, support, and observe specific families?
7. What Sunday School curriculum do you use with your children, youth, and parents?
8. How does your church celebrate or recognize the various spiritual and physical progress in the youth and children?
9. Do you have a children's worship hour?
10. Are the parents given the option to keep their children in the sanctuary with them during the sermon?
11. How often, if ever, does the church host a function intended to bring families together?
12. Describe these functions.
13. What is unique about your congregation?
14. How many families do you have on your membership roles?
15. Upon what do you base that number?
16. How many of those families attend no more than two times a month?
17. What, if any, is your annual budget for family ministry functions?
18. What is your estimated attendance for Sunday morning worship?
19. Of that estimate, what number would you say are parents who attend church at least twice a month?
20. And what number would you say are single adults?

APPENDIX 5

INSTRUMENTATION

Below is the “Family Discipleship Perceptions and Practices Survey” with additional demographic questions added.

“The research in which you are about to participate is designed to explore parents perceptions of parental roles as primary disciplers, and the actual practices of parents. This research is being conducted by W. Ryan Steenburg for the purpose of dissertation research. In this research, you will be asked to answer 24 total questions, one of which is identifying the church where you attend. Any information you provide will be held *strictly* confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this online survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.”

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family’s schedule.						

2. I would like to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in our home, but my family is just too busy for that right now. It will probably be that way for quite a while.					
3. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.					
4. When my child spontaneously asks a biblical or theological question, I really wish that my child would have asked a minister or other church leader instead of me.					

5. I want to do whatever it takes for my child to succeed in certain sports or school activities—even if that means my family is too busy some weeks to eat any meals together.					
6. Parents—and particularly fathers—have responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.					
7. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the Gospel with others.					
8. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.					

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once</i>	<i>A couple times</i>	<i>3 to 4 times</i>	<i>5 or 6 times</i>	<i>7 or more times</i>
9. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past WEEK have I prayed aloud with any of my children?						
10. How many times in the past WEEK has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned OFF?						
11. How many times in the past MONTH have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?						
12. How many times in the past MONTH have I discussed any biblical or spiritual matters with any of my children while engaging in day-to-day activities?						

13. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?					
14. How many times in the past TWO MONTHS have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?					
15. How many times in the past YEAR have I intentionally participated with one or more of my children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church?					

16. How often in the past YEAR has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual growth?						
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Double asterisk (**) indicates a qualifying question.

<i>Demographic Questions</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
17. **Married, husband and wife?		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
18. Gender? Which parent is taking the survey?		

<i>Question</i>	<i>18-25 yrs</i>	<i>26-35</i>	<i>36-45</i>	<i>46-55</i>	<i>56+</i>
19. What is your age range?					
20. What is the age range of your children?	<i>18m-35m</i>	<i>3-6yr</i>	<i>7-12</i>	<i>13-15</i>	<i>16-18</i>
**Youngest Child					
**Oldest Child					
<i>Question</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1-2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5+</i>
21. **Number of children currently living at home?					
22. Number of living children out of the home or older than 18 years of age?					

<i>Question</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4+</i>
23. **How many times a month do you attend church?					

<i>Church Affiliation</i>	<i>Church Name</i>	<i>5 digit zip code</i>
24. Name and zip code of where you attend church?		

APPENDIX 6

LETTER OF PERMISSION

Please see the attached letter of permission from the survey developer.



The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

26 August 2010

W. Ryan Steenburg
7402 Lanfair Dr
Louisville, KY 40241

Dear Ryan,

I grant permission for you to use the Family Perspectives and Practices Survey, including the addition of items to collect demographic information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Timothy Paul Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Timothy Paul Jones, Ph.D.

School of Church Ministries
Associate Professor of Discipleship and Family Ministry
Editor of The Journal of Family Ministry

APPENDIX 7

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with prioritization of consistent family devotional or worship times and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .518$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P1	B1
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.518**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	.518**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .449$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P1	B2
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.449**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87

B2	Pearson Correlation	.449**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .573$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P1	B3
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.573**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	.573**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .384$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P1	B4
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B4	Pearson Correlation	.384**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .510$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P1	B5
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.510**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	.510**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .489$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P1	B6
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.489**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	.489**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .255$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.017$

Correlations

		P1	B7
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.255*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017
	N	87	87
B7	Pearson Correlation	.255*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .238$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.027$

Correlations

		P1	B8
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.238*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.027
	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	.238*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .173$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.112$

Correlations

		P1	B9
P1	Pearson Correlation	1	.173
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.112
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	.173	1

Sig. (2-tailed)	.112	
N	86	86

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with desire to do regular family devotions or Bible reading in the home despite being too busy now and in the foreseeable future and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.386$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P2	B1
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	-.386**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.271$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P2	B2
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.271*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	-.271*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	87	87

Correlations

		P2	B2
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.271*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	-.271*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.554$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P2	B3
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.554**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	-.554**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.411$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P2	B4
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.411**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87

B4	Pearson Correlation	-.411**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.434$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P2	B5
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.434**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.434**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.534$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P2	B6
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.534**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	-.534**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.192$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.074$

		P2	B7
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.192
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.074
	N	87	87
B7	Pearson Correlation	-.192	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	
	N	87	87

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.186$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.085$.

		P2	B8
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.186
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.085
	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	-.186	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.085	
	N	87	87

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.302$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.005$

Correlations

		P2	B9
P2	Pearson Correlation	1	-.302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	-.302**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	86	86

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with the belief that church is where children ought to receive most of their bible teaching and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.342$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.001$

Correlations

		P3	B1
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.342**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	-.342**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.340$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.001$

Correlations

		P3	B2
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.340**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	-.340**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.331$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.002$

Correlations

		P3	B3
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	-.331**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.167$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.121$

Correlations

		P3	B4
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.167
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.121
	N	87	87

B4	Pearson Correlation	-.167	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	
	N	87	87

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.171$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.114$

Correlations

		P3	B5
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.171
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.114
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.171	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	
	N	87	87

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.360$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.001$

Correlations

		P3	B6
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	-.360**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.145$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.179$

		P3	B7
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.145
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.179
	N	87	87
B7	Pearson Correlation	-.145	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.179	
	N	87	87

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.247$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.021$

		P3	B8
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.247*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	-.247*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.090$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.410$

		P3	B9
P3	Pearson Correlation	1	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.410
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	-.090	1

Sig. (2-tailed)	.410	
N	86	86

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with the desire to have a child's spontaneous biblical or theological question asked of a minister or other church leader than oneself and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.194$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.072$

Correlations

		P4	B1
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.194
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.072
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	-.194	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	
	N	87	87

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.394$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P4	B2
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	-.394**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.356$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.001$

		P4	B3
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.356**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	-.356**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.347$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.001$

		P4	B4
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.347**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
B4	Pearson Correlation	-.347**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.354$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.001$

Correlations

		P4	B5
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.354**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.354**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.318$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.003$

Correlations

		P4	B6
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.318**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	-.318**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.109$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.315$

Correlations

		P4	B7
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.315
	N	87	87

B7	Pearson Correlation	-.109	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.315	
	N	87	87

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.076$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.485$

Correlations

		P4	B8
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.485
	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	-.076	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.485	
	N	87	87

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.086$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.429$

Correlations

		P4	B9
P4	Pearson Correlation	1	-.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.429
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	-.086	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.429	
	N	86	86

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with the commitment to a child's success in sports or school activities even if it means sacrificing family meal time and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.128$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.236$

Correlations

		P5	B1
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.236
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	-.128	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.236	
	N	87	87

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.392$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.000$

Correlations

		P5	B2
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.392**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	-.392**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.181$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.093$

Correlations

		P5	B3
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.181
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.093
	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	-.181	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.093	
	N	87	87

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.121$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.265$

Correlations

		P5	B4
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.121
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.265
	N	87	87
B4	Pearson Correlation	-.121	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.265	
	N	87	87

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.270$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.011$

Correlations

		P5	B5
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.270*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.270*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	87	87

Correlations

		P5	B5
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.270*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.270*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.228$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.034$

Correlations

		P5	B6
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.228*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.034
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	-.228*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.018$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.866$

Correlations

		P5	B7
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.866
	N	87	87

B7	Pearson Correlation	-.018	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.866	
	N	87	87

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .058$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.584$

Correlations

		P5	B8
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	.058
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.594
	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	.058	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.594	
	N	87	87

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.110$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.314$

Correlations

		P5	B9
P5	Pearson Correlation	1	-.110
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.314
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	-.110	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.314	
	N	86	86

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with the belief that parents, particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .147$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.175$

Correlations

		P6	B1
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.175
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	.147	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.175	
	N	87	87

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .057$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.597$

Correlations

		P6	B2
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.597
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	.057	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.597	
	N	87	87

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .046$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.671$

Correlations

		P6	B3
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.671

	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	.046	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.671	
	N	87	87

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .063$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.562$

Correlations

		P6	B4
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.562
	N	87	87
B4	Pearson Correlation	.063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.562	
	N	87	87

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .141$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.194$

Correlations

		P6	B5
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.194
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	.141	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.194	
	N	87	87

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.017$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.875$

		P6	B6
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	-.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.875
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	-.017	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.875	
	N	87	87

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .022$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.842$

		P6	B7
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.842
	N	87	87
B7	Pearson Correlation	.022	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.842	
	N	87	87

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.091$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.404$

		P6	B8
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	-.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.404

	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	-.091	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.404	
	N	87	87

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .212$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.050$

		P6	B9
P6	Pearson Correlation	1	.212
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.050
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	.212	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	
	N	86	86

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with the belief that church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling their children and teaching them to share the Gospel with others and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.171$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.114$

		P7	B1
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.171
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.114
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	-.171	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	
	N	87	87

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.301$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.005$

		P7	B2
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.301**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	-.301**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.270$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.011$

		P7	B3
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.270*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	-.270*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.189$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.079$

Correlations

		P7	B4
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.189
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.079
	N	87	87
B4	Pearson Correlation	-.189	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	
	N	87	87

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.169$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.118$

Correlations

		P7	B5
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.118
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.169	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.118	
	N	87	87

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.302$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.005$

Correlations

		P7	B6
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	-.302**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	

N	87	87
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.236$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.028$

Correlations

		P7	B7
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.236*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028
	N	87	87
B7	Pearson Correlation	-.236*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.072$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.508$

Correlations

		P7	B8
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.508
	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	-.072	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.508	
	N	87	87

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.154$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.157$

		P7	B9
P7	Pearson Correlation	1	-.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.157
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	-.154	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.157	
	N	86	86

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the respondent's degree of agreement with the belief that their church has helped them develop a clear plan for their child's spiritual growth and...

1. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the respondent had prayed aloud with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .142$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.189$

		P8	B1
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.189
	N	87	87
B1	Pearson Correlation	.142	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.189	
	N	87	87

2. ...the number of times in the past WEEK the family had eaten a meal with all media turned off.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.038$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.728$

Correlations

		P8	B2
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.728
	N	87	87
B2	Pearson Correlation	-.038	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.728	
	N	87	87

3. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent read or discussed the Bible with any of their children.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .008$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.942$

Correlations

		P8	B3
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.942
	N	87	87
B3	Pearson Correlation	.008	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.942	
	N	87	87

4. ...the number of times in the past MONTH the respondent had discussed biblical or spiritual matters with any of their children while engaged in day-to-day activities.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.050$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.644$

Correlations

		P8	B4
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	-.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.644
	N	87	87
B4	Pearson Correlation	-.050	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.644	
	N	87	87

5. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the family had engaged in devotional or worship time in the home.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = -.053$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.627$

Correlations

		P8	B5
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	-.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.627
	N	87	87
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.053	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.627	
	N	87	87

6. ...the number of times in the past TWO MONTHS the respondent had spoken with their spouse or a close friend about their children's spiritual development.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .025$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.817$

Correlations

		P8	B6
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.817
	N	87	87
B6	Pearson Correlation	.025	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.817	
	N	87	87

7. ...the number of times in the past YEAR the respondent had intentionally participated with any of their children in witnessing to a non-Christian or inviting a non-Christian to church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .196$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.069$

Correlations

		P8	B7
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	.196
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.069
	N	87	87
B7	Pearson Correlation	.196	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069	
	N	87	87

8. ...the number of times in the past YEAR any church leader had made any contact with the respondent to help them engage actively in their child's spiritual growth.

Result: Overall, there was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .309$, $n = 87$, $p = 0.004$

Correlations

		P8	B8
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	.309**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	87	87
B8	Pearson Correlation	.309**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	87	87

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

9. ...the number of times a MONTH the family attends church.

Result: Overall, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = .087$, $n = 86$, $p = 0.428$

Correlations

		P8	B9
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.428
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	.087	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.428	

Correlations

		P8	B9
P8	Pearson Correlation	1	.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.428
	N	87	86
B9	Pearson Correlation	.087	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.428	
	N	86	86

APPENDIX 8

FULL DATA ANALYSIS

The figures that follow represent the full data set from the regression analysis. In the figures, “Frequency” refers to the frequency of all behaviors, and “P#” refers to the corresponding perception which is the same as the corresponding question from the survey instrument.

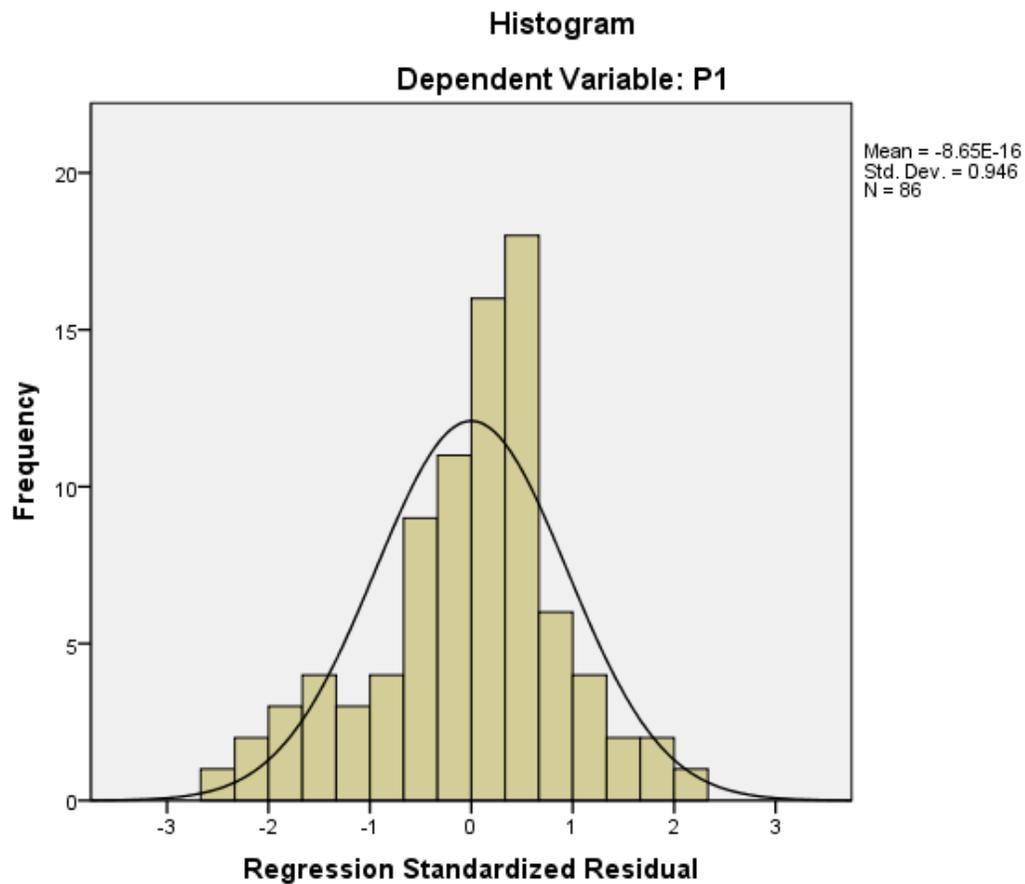


Figure A1

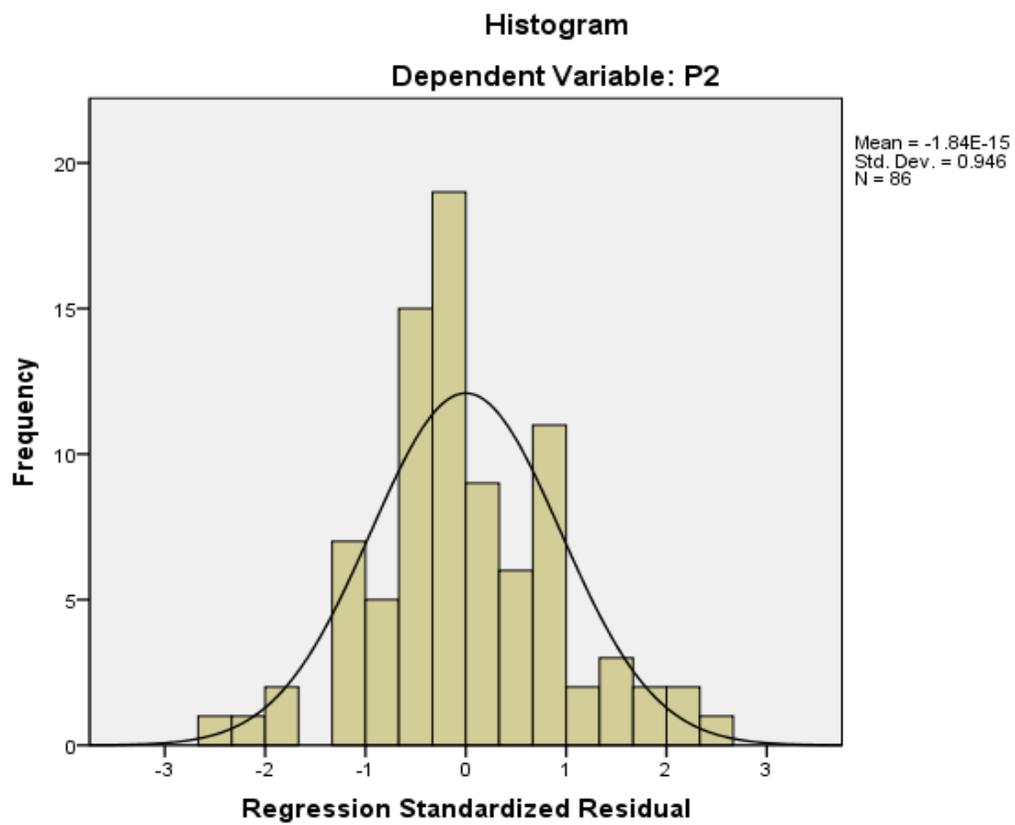


Figure A2

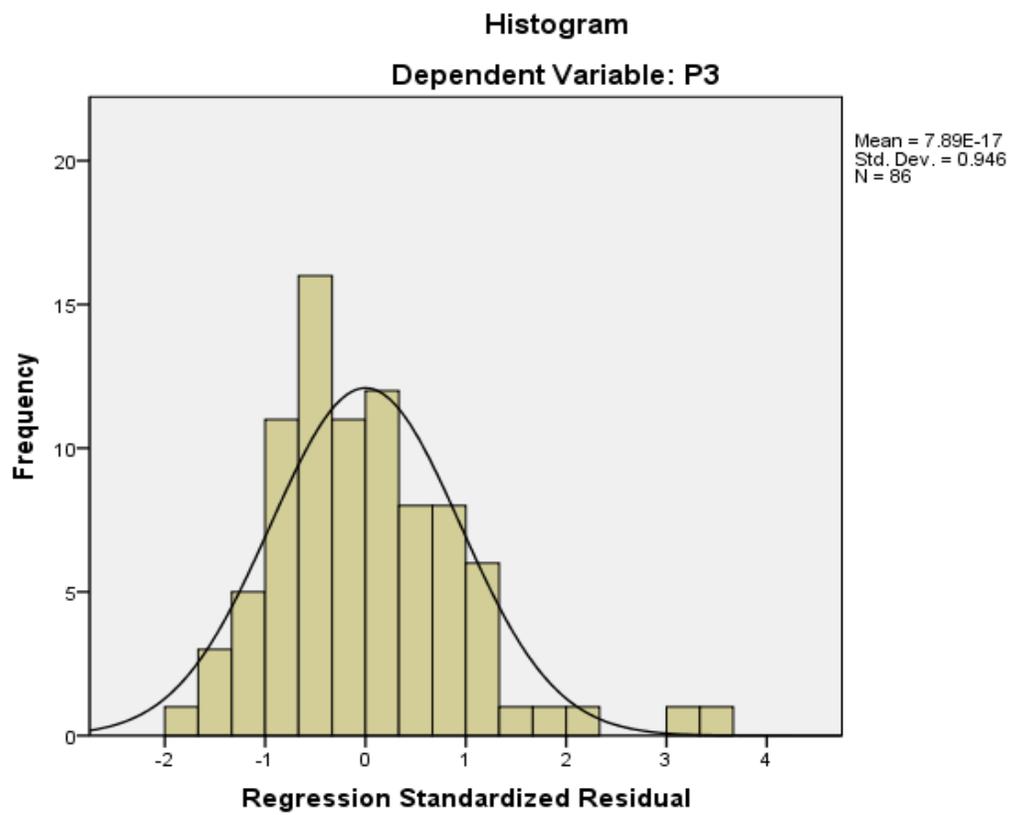


Figure A3

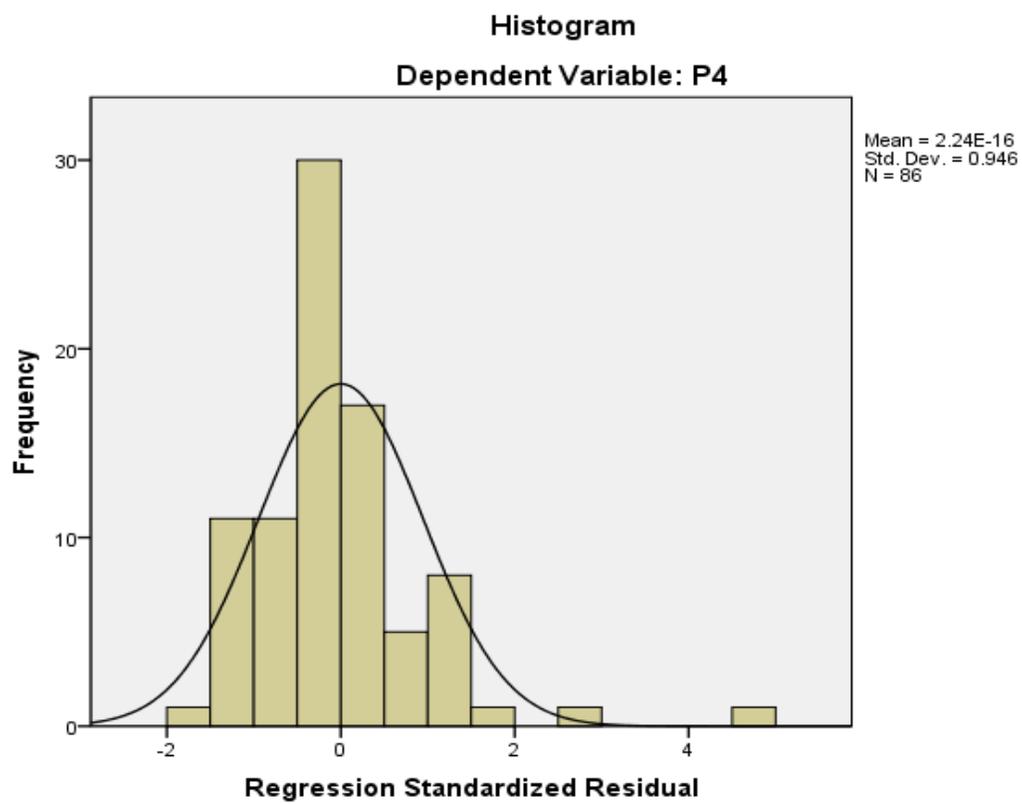


Figure A4

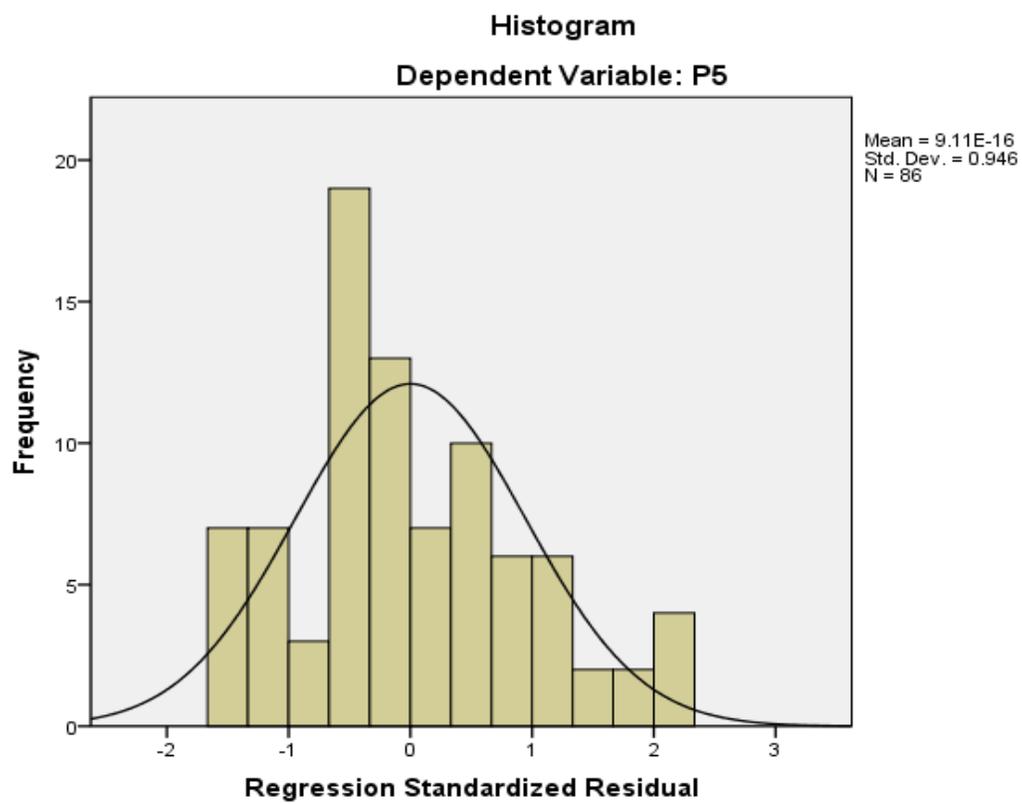


Figure A5

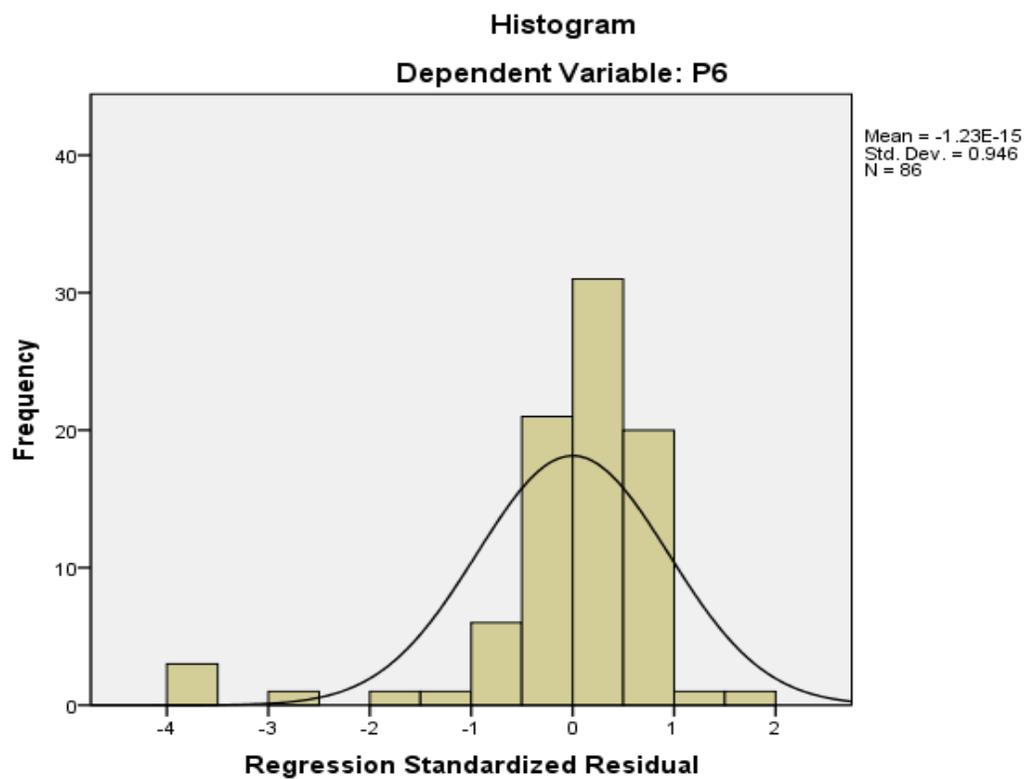


Figure A6

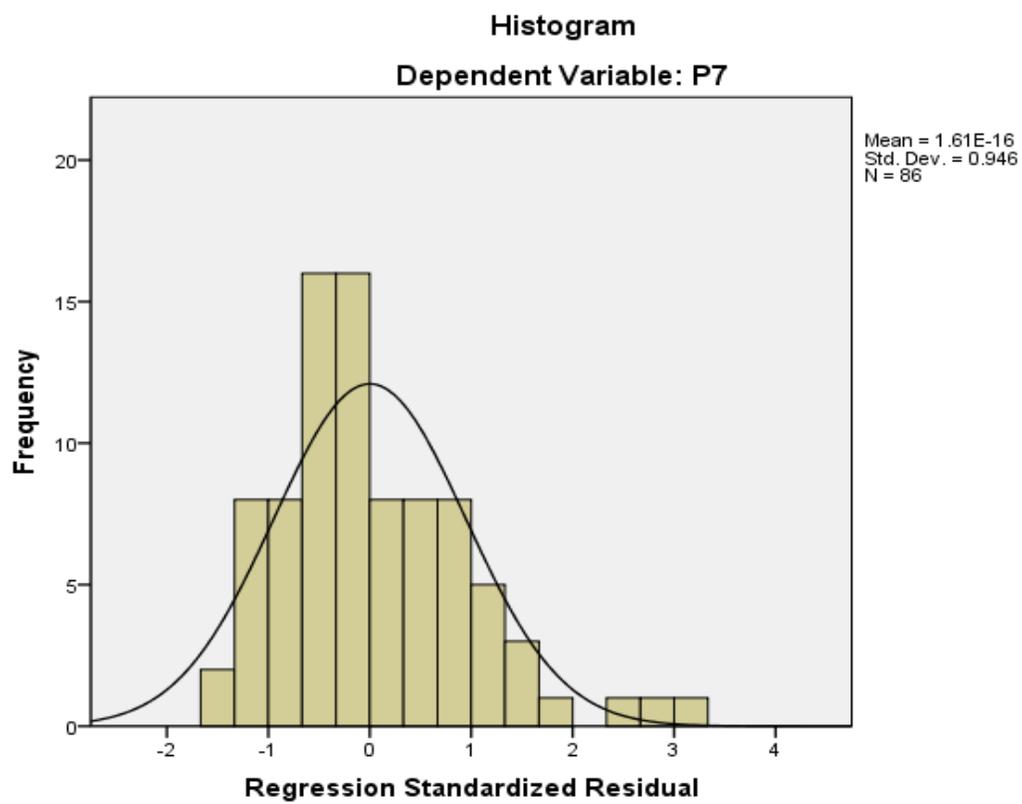


Figure A7

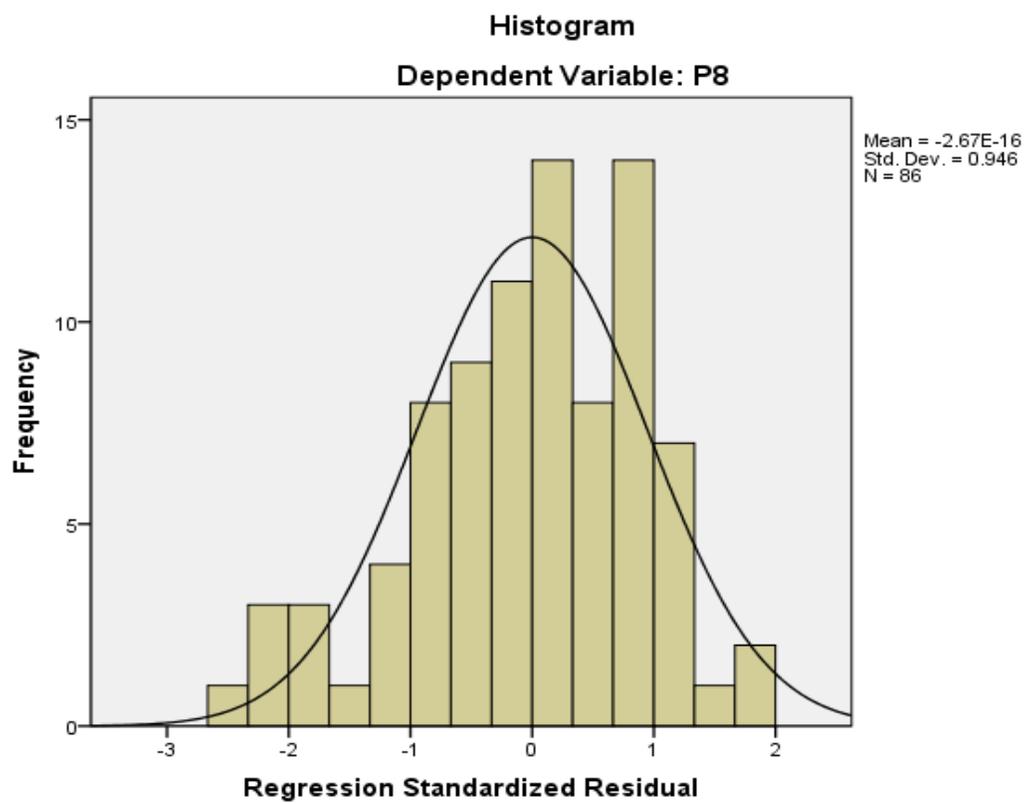


Figure A8

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR TRAINING PARENTS IN FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

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The churches concern for the youth and children is not a new concern. This concern has been a topic of the church for many generations. The church has responded in the past by establishing programs such as Sunday school and youth group. Of more recent years, the church has sought ways in which to raise the perception of the parents in the church. Some churches have taken strides in an effort to raise the awareness of the parents' responsibility in the home, and others to raise the awareness of the possibilities available at church.

This two-phase sequential mixed methods study explored the best practices for training parents for household family discipleship among churches identified as holding, and conducting, a family ministry approach. The first phase of this study quantitatively surveyed parents to determine the practices and perceptions within the home. The second phase of this study qualitatively explored the practices and customs of the identified churches to better understand which practices may or may not be most effective in training parents for household family discipleship.

The quantitative data were collected via an online hosting company, and the results then run through a variety of analysis such as Pearson's *r*, ANOVA, and a full

regression analysis. The data indicate that the better a parents' perception of their role as the primary discipler, the more frequent the discipleship practices. Overall, 7 specific practices were identified through the qualitative data collection as being effective practices to train parents in household family discipleship.

KEYWORDS: family discipleship, family ministry, family integrated, family equipping

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