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EQUIPPING THE CHURCH TO DISCIPLE THEIR CHILDREN
AT MYUNSUNG CHURCH, SOUTH KOREA

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**EQUIPPING THE CHURCH TO DISCIPLE THEIR CHILDREN
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For the glory of God.

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PREFACE

I grew up in church because I was born into a pastor's family. Before I was born, my father and grandfather did not have money, not even a house. But the neighboring church allowed my family to live in the church. My family met God and believed in him during their stay there. Thus began my family's journey to becoming a pastor's family.

Eventually, my family started another church in one bedroom. After ten years of this house church, they built a church building. I was born after this, which is why I have lived in the church for a long time. Our church has increased in number, especially among the young generation. Although there are still plenty of adults in the church, my father worries about leaving the church to the young generation. I return to South Korea and visit the church every summer vacation. However, much time has passed since I have seen my friends who once went to the church with me. This had perplexed me for quite some time. But I discovered the reason for this through a family ministry class.

Two years ago, I took the Family Ministry class with Dr. Randy Stinson during winter vacation. Dr. Stinson required his students to read several family ministry books. I was impressed with two of the books, *Shift* by Brian Haynes and *Family Ministry Field Guide* by Timothy Paul Jones. These two books enlightened me as to why young generations leave the church.

I was surprised to see that both books share the same perspectives. Parents are powerful influences on their children, and pastors should help parents learn how to teach Scripture by studying the Bible. In the past, pastors have led both the parents and the young generation. However, parents can exert more influence on their children than pastors can. Many pastors know they should change the system to place more emphasis

on the parents' need to lead their children, for ample Scriptural evidence explains parents' roles and responsibilities in relation to their children.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many Koreans became Christians shortly after the South and North Korean war. The war resulted in much poverty, so many turned to God and prayed for his help. In contrast, Korean parents today have disposable income and give a great deal of money to their children. Their children spend this money on entertainment outside the home and are not concerned about their faith. Additionally, parents have neglected family discipleship because they are focused on their own lives without concern for their children's faith. However, parents should know that they are biblically responsible for their children's spiritual growth.

Context

MyungSung Church was started by my grandfather. He founded and pastored the congregation for forty years with my father, who is presently the senior pastor. When I was young, my father informed me that many churches envied MyungSung Church for its large children's ministry. The youth group had approximately fifty members, and the young adults made up almost half of the entire church attendance. However, after I underwent military training from 2009 to 2011, the church lost much of its young attendants. The children's ministry remained at around fifty attendants, the youth group decreased to about twenty, and the young adults likewise decreased to about twenty attendants.

MyungSung Church has several strengths, such as its Eating the Dream, Pajama Camp, and Summer Story programs. Eating the Dream is a free program in the church, and children ages eight to nineteen can join on May 5, which is Children's Day in

South Korea. Many parents with little money dislike Children's Day because they cannot afford to do much with their children on the fifth of May. As a result, MyungSung Church decided to borrow Han River Park and set up twenty booths there. Each booth has a different theme, such as an English booth, nail art booth, golf booth, and a basketball booth. The church invites children to come with their parents. The Eating the Dream program provides many evangelistic opportunities because the church helps parents give children more fun on Children's Day, and parents can recognize that churches want to help them when they are struggling.

The church's second program began twenty years ago with its Vacation Bible School (VBS) for elementary aged children. Those children waited eagerly for VBS every year because of its fun activities. Today, however, children do not like VBS because it is boring to them, so the senior pastor decided to replace the yearly VBS with a monthly Pajama Camp. During Pajama Camp, children come to the church and worship God. Afterward, they swim in the pool that was installed in front of the church. At night, children prepare dinner with their teacher, watch movies, and then go to bed. They all wake at five o'clock in the morning for a dawn service with adults. MyungSung Church was surprised that many more children joined Pajama Camp than had previously joined VBS. Pajama Camp seems to lead to better relationships between teachers and children.

MyungSung tailored its third program, Summer Story, to be a family ministry program. Summer Story occurs from July to August every year, purposing to build interaction between parents and their children. Every year, the senior pastor separates the families into teams of ten families each. Before Summer Story begins, the church prepares a special song for the Friday night worship service, cleans the church on Saturday, and includes a trip to build relationships in the community and to acquire cooperation for the event. During the summer program, each team of families must complete three missions. Thus, children and their parents grow closer during Summer

Story, and families become more familiar with each other than before. Summer Story is a good program for the family ministry.

Despite these wonderful programs, MyungSung Church has several weaknesses. First, the pastors and deacons did not cooperate with each other until 2019. The pastors desired to know why certain church members were not coming to the church. Although the senior pastor asked the associate pastors to call the absent members, they did not call them. Moreover, the deacons of the church were passive about exhorting their children to go to church. The deacons did not realize their responsibility to their offspring. They complained that the cooperation of pastors did not lead the members of the church. Both the pastors and the parents of the church did not understand their responsibilities for the children's ministry or the family ministry.

The church's second weakness was its lack of focus on evangelism when my father became the senior pastor in 2011. Even while imprisoned, Paul spread the Word of God (Acts 16:16-40). However, the pastors and the leader of the deacons did not go to school to learn how to encourage those under their discipleship to invite children to the church. They merely prepared their sermons. Preaching is the most important part of ministry for the worship service. However, evangelism is one of the most important aspects of the church, because if nobody comes to the church, pastors will have no one to preach to.

Third, the pastors and parents do not effectively teach and explain the image of God and who he is, despite the pastors explaining the Bible and the parents sharing their testimonies. As a result, the children say they do not believe in God because God is invisible. Vern L. Bengtson's quote describes MyungSung Church well: "Even some Millennials with a firm belief in God seem unable to express their thoughts and feelings about their spiritual and religious perspectives."¹

¹ Vern L. Bengtson, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 47.

Fourth, children feel pressure from their parents to go to church. Paul Lee, a member of MyungSung Church, related an incident where his parents witnessed a miracle from God when one of the pastors prayed over a man and exorcised a demon from him. However, Lee did not witness the miracle, so he still did not believe in God at that time. He even developed hostility toward Christianity and the church due to his parents' pressure. Lee wanted his parents to persuade him to believe in God and communicate with pastors about his struggle. However, Lee did not want to go to church and communicate with the pastors himself.

The last weakness of MyungSung Church is revealed in what the children pursue. The young people focus too much on entertainment and enjoying their lives. They are bored and lonely at church because they lose connection for a long time with their friends who do not attend church, resulting in a loss of communication. The senior pastors want to change the structure of the church and add programs such as camping and barbecue parties that will encourage the development of children's faith.

The pastors at MyungSung Church should know the biblical structure for family ministry and teach it to parents so that parents can practice leadership in the church. Church members should concern themselves with their children because they are God's creatures. As such, the young people need to be able to cooperate with parents. If church members observe that children are absent in the children's worship service, members that are close with their parents should call the parents and learn the reason the children are not attending church; this will reveal the church's concern for them. Then, pastors and congregants should pray for God to help them support the parents and provide them with motivation.

The pastors at MyungSung Church comprise the Parents Association Group, which people can call when children are absent from church. In response to these calls, the group elects a leader from among the parents to call the children's parents to inquire why they have not come to church. Many pastors have lost their authority today, and

parents find themselves concerned about the relationships between pastors and families. So, parents can be a positive influence on others by calling other parents to learn why their children are absent and to advise them to come to church. Bengtson mentions, “For Mainline Protestants, percentages of grandparents whose grandchildren shared their religious tradition decreased considerably between 1970 and 2005, and for Catholics, the decline was even sharper.”² Parents neglect God’s Word concerning their responsibilities and roles, so now the number of those who hold to the Christian faith is decreasing continually.

Brian Vander Ark explains a similar collaboration plan between families and the church in his chapter of Michael Chanley’s *Family + Church*. He mentions that churches should delegate a parent liaison team to call other parents to invite their children, because parents can cooperate with other parents better than church workers can.³ Furthermore, part of this family ministry plan encourages parents to prioritize family worship in their home. While parents hold family worship at home, children can begin to know who God is through the effective influence of their parents. Parents should continually evaluate their hearts and seek to grow in their own faith for the sake of their children’s faith.

To aid in this family ministry plan, pastors need to keep up-to-date contact information for all members. This way, the church will have correct phone numbers to call to inquire of a family’s absence and to persuade them to return to the church. Absentee families wait for these calls because they appreciate others showing concern for them. In addition, the associate pastors will benefit from a program called Quiet Time. This program helps pastors ascertain children’s problems, such as anxiety or confusion

² Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 102.

³ Brian Vander Ark, “Putting the Pieces Together,” in *Collaborate: Family + Church*, ed. Michael Chanley (Louisville: Ministers Label, 2010), 33.

about doctrine, and helps develop the children's faith. Some young people have ceased communicating with their pastors, which is cause for concern when those young people face confusion because they may end up misunderstanding much about God and the Christian faith. Thus, children can communicate and share their opinions of the Bible through the Quiet Time program.

Rationale

In South Korea, many churches do not confront their need to equip their families and the church for family ministry. MyungSung Church was built approximately forty years ago and did not prepare for a family ministry because no one was aware of the necessity of it. When the current senior pastor was the associate pastor, he simply shepherded children without the help of the parents because, at that time, pastors had authority over both parents and children. However, by the time he transitioned to senior pastor, the new associate pastor could not lead the children because children now defy the authority of pastors and do not respect them. The associate pastors do not lead them well. In addition, MyungSung Church still uses an age-segmented structure and wants to have the children led within a context of mainly peer relationships. The church needs to change specifically in the following ways.

First, the pastors, parents, and congregation in this church need to know their respective roles. Failure to recognize these roles prevented them from knowing why children were leaving the church. God gives reasons why people believe in God in Genesis 2:18-25, and Ephesians 5:22-33 explains household roles. However, congregants believe that pastors need to lead children without the help of parents.

Second, parents need to teach the Bible to their children, and children need to obey their parents in the Lord, according to Ephesians 6:1-4. Twenty years ago in the church, many parents had good relationships with their children. But today, many parents do not have true connection with their children; as a result, those children do not want to

communicate with their parents. Their only motivation for going home is to watch television or use the internet to communicate with their friends.

Third, the church needs to share the good news with people who do not believe in God. Otherwise, children will continue to lose their faith. However, many congregants will assume that a deacon's son or daughter has faith and should be required to serve in the church. But children often respond that they are not deacons themselves and that they desire the congregation to treat them and care for them as new members. An atmosphere of consistent evangelism in the church will help cultivate in the young generation a true faith in the true gospel.

Fourth, parents must recognize they are more powerful influencers than pastors or the congregation as a whole. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says that parents have a responsibility to lead their children to God. In South Korean culture, many children live with their parents until they get married, and parents support their children until they are able to fend for themselves. Thus, parents have more power to influence and teach their children in the ways of the Lord. However, Timothy Paul Jones observes families in other countries today failing to capitalize on the influence they have on their children. He relays that "more than one-third of parents with school-aged children had never engaged in any form of family devotional or worship time at any time in the past couple of months."⁴ It would help to biblically clarify the relationship between pastors, the church, and parents.

Finally, MyungSung Church will do well to continue making small groups for the sake of the Quiet Time program. Many children do not read the Bible or know the stories within it. Also, they do not typically share about their lives. So, after worship

⁴ Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 28.

service, small groups will begin Quiet Time to encourage everyone in the group to be vulnerable and share about their lives in the Lord.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to equip MyungSung Church to disciple their children. I will conduct a pre- and post-survey with parents in the church to learn about their motivations and knowledge, prepare the family ministry equipping lectures, and teach the pastors, parents, children, and congregation. Then parents will disciple their children to grow in their faith. Families must meet a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation standards.

Goals

The project has the following three goals.

1. The first goal is to assess the family discipleship practices at MyungSung Church.
2. The two goal is to develop an eight-session curriculum that will equip parents to disciple their children.
3. The third goal is to equip parents to disciple their children at home.

Research Methodology

The first goal is to assess the family discipleship practices at MyungSung Church. This goal was measured by the Family Discipleship Practices Inventory given to twelve member families who have children in MyungSung Church (appendix 1). This inventory includes two parts: Family Discipleship Practices Inventory (FDPI) for parents. Both the parents will be surveyed regarding current family discipleship practices within the home. This first goal is considered successfully met when parents evaluate the content and when the inventory analyzes the current discipleship situation in MyungSung families.

The second goal is to develop an eight-session curriculum that will equip parents to disciple their children. This goal was achieved by creating a teaching curriculum that exhibits biblical knowledge, teaching methodology, and application, and then teaching this eight-session course to parents in the church. This goal is considered successfully met when the parents in the course meet 90 percent of the course's requirements. If the benchmark cannot reach 90 percent, the eight sessions will be revised to meet the standard level.

The third goal is to equip parents to disciple their children at home. Reaching the goal began with a t-test that measured the parents' level of knowledge and their motivation to share the gospel with their children at home. This second goal is considered successfully met when the t-test demonstrates a positive statistic, when each parent's score meets or exceeds the desired level on the evaluation rubric.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

Pastor. The pastor is an officer of the church who cares for and teaches the entire congregation through weekly preaching. The pastor needs to teach the family-equipping ministry model to parents and encourage parents to lead their children. Donald K. McKim defines a pastor as “[one] who has spiritual oversight over a congregation of Christian believers in a church or Christian community (Eph 4:11). Also, the shepherd of a flock.”⁵

Parents. Parents include a child's father and mother, single parents, and primary caregivers. They are the primary influencers and faith trainers of their children. Scottie May states, “A parent is not limited to the biological relationship of parent and child; it also includes adoptive parenting, similar to monitoring. These parallel the

⁵ Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 230.

relationship God has to the children of Israel and the ‘adopted’ gentile.’⁶ The parent needs to demonstrate the love of God before their children and teach them the Christian faith.

Children. Children are those born of their parents, and they need to honor their parents. Children also include those adopted, whether formally or informally (e.g., guardianship or fostering). Jones states that children are an important and wonderful gift from God.⁷

Congregation. The congregation is a group of people who assemble in the church to worship God. They need to partner with parents in their children’s spiritual development. They should support and pray for them. Daniel J. Treier defines a congregation as “[the] community of the Triune God, serving as the concrete manifestation of God’s eschatological kingdom in the world.”⁸

Discipleship. Discipleship is a process that begins with personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ, as he has been revealed in Scripture. Conformity to Jesus Christ is the goal of discipleship; “spiritual development” and “Christian formation” describe progress toward this goal.⁹

Family-equipping ministry model. This model represents cooperation with the church’s present ministries. As the influencers and primary disciple makers for their children, parents need to know how to disciple their children. Parents need to know that integrated ministry has failed recently. Jones says, “In its simplest definition, family-equipping ministry simply means coordinating every aspect of your present ministry so

⁶ Scottie May, “Parenthood,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 643.

⁷ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 76.

⁸ Daniel J. Treier, “Church,” in Treier and Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 181.

⁹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 17.

that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable as primary disciplinarians in their children's lives."¹⁰

Conclusion

Parents need to be equipped with a family ministry knowledge in order to disciple their children well. And the role of children is to rely on their parents. Moreover, the father has the primary role as head of the household and needs to take leadership in disciplining his family. Thus, the survey in this project focuses on evaluating the father. Both parents together will benefit from joining the eight-session curriculum, being equipped to disciple their children and thereby cultivating faith in the next generation.

¹⁰ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 132.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE
PRIMARY MEANS OF FAMILY
DISCIPLESHIP

This chapter deals with three passages from Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Ephesians. The texts explain how the family is created by God and that parents should be one flesh in God. As one flesh, parents should disciple their children unto God, for God created the family to live together in accordance with his commands. Exegesis of and commentary on Genesis 2:18-25 will assist the thesis that God gave Eve as a helper, and she united with Adam. They are one flesh.

Genesis

God revealed in Genesis 2:18-25 that “[It] is not good for the man to be alone” (v. 18).¹ God declared creation to be good, but the man was alone. So, God took a rib from Adam, used it to create Eve, and joined the two to become one flesh. God created man and woman to complement each other, instructing them to leave their parents to build their own family. A husband and wife live in a shameless relationship and are one flesh.

Genesis 2:18

After the creation of Adam, man was alone. Therefore, God made a woman suitable to help Adam. G. Charles Aalders writes, “God decided to provide man with a life’s companion.”² God created Eve as a worthy companion for Adam, bringing

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the New International Version.

² G. Charles Aalders, *Genesis*, Bible Student’s Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 1:93-94.

completeness to their lives. God already knew what Adam needed to be better. U. Cassuto defines the Hebrew word for helper: “[Literally, ‘a helper as in front of him’] a helper like him, suited to him, worthy of him, corresponding to him.”³ God knew what Adam needed and provided exactly what Adam needed in Eve. When God created people, they were not made to be alone. Thus, God knew Adam and Eve would support each other.

Genesis 2:19-20

After highlighting Adam’s need, God did not immediately create Eve. Instead, God brought before Adam all the animals for Adam to name. But among them all, Adam did not find a suitable companion to support him. The emphasis here is that the animals could not be fit with the role of a woman. Adam needed a soulmate to live with him.

Aalders emphasizes the contrast between the animals and Eve:

[T]his sense of need became a reality as man, with his superior intelligence, looked at the animals and recognized his own uniqueness. At the same time, he must have realized that many of the animals had a certain social companionship among themselves that he lacked. These social needs on the part of man the animals could not satisfy because of his superiority.⁴

When God created Adam, he gave him authority to name all the creatures of the earth. God created Adam as distinct from the animals, giving him a superiority over them. Thus, God recognized that man needed social companionship with a creature equal to him. Cassuto explains, “The phrase, a helper corresponding to him, at the conclusion of the verse, which reiterates the words of the Lord God at the end of v. 18, recalls the divine intention, emphasizing that this has not yet been fulfilled, and we look forward to its realization.”⁵ God recognized that Adam would not be complete by himself, so God

³ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part 1: From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1961), 127.

⁴ Aalders, *Genesis*, 94.

⁵ Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah*, 133.

created Eve to be Adam's suitable companion.

Genesis 2:21-22

God put Adam in a deep sleep, and by miracle—not by surgery—God took out his rib. Aalders states, “The Hebrew word translated ‘rib’ appears nowhere else in the Old Testament with this meaning. The usual meaning is ‘side.’”⁶ Therefore, “rib” could mean body and side. Woman came from man's side and received a rib from man, so they are meant to be one flesh. “One flesh” does not necessary allude to a sexual relationship, but simply illustrates the union of husband and wife.

Aalders mentions a critique of God's creation of Eve: “Then when research in the human anatomy reveals that men and women have precisely the same number of ribs, this whole passage has been called into question and made a matter of ridicule.”⁷ Men and women do not have adequate grounds or authority to ridicule God's method of creation, for God is Creator and we are his creation.

Based on the Scriptures, then, one can be confident that Eve was created by God's word and Adam's rib, in order to enter a complete, one-flesh union with Adam. God gave Adam exactly what he needed in Eve: a one-flesh union with a complementary counterpart.

Genesis 2:23

In this verse, Adam recognized that Eve was his life's companion, someone to assist and complete him. Aalders says, “Man immediately recognized her as the life's companion who was the complete fulfilment of the longing that had been awakened in him. She was his equal and he knew, by divine revelation, that she had been taken out of

⁶ Aalders, *Genesis*, 95.

⁷ Aalders, *Genesis*, 96.

his own body.”⁸ Aalders continues, “Along those lines, man should know that, although the woman was created by the Word of God and the rib of the man, the man and woman are equal.”⁹ God gave Adam one who was his helper and joy. The point of verse 23 is to introduce the man and woman now become family who will soon be parents together. Also important is that the couple shares in a blood relationship that cannot be broken.

Genesis 2:24

Genesis 2:24 defines marriage based on the union of Adam and Eve. Alders writes, “Marriage is an ordinance of God.”¹⁰ This verse prescribes the responsibilities of each person within a marriage. Eve’s bone is from Adam’s body, so she should return to his body, or cling to him. A man should not seek a wife merely as a means of fulfilling his sexual desires. Rather, one seeks a wife to establish a spiritual relationship and an independent family unit. Cassuto’s definition for the Hebrew word for “leave” is helpful: “The meaning of the verse is simply this: whilst a man is single, he forms part of his father’s family, but when he takes a wife, he founds a new family. When he marries, his love for his wife transcends that for his parents.”¹¹ Genesis 2:24 further indicates that the husband and wife are to cooperate with one another. Love involves helping and serving the other.

Genesis 2:25

Adam and Eve were not ashamed of their nakedness, for this was prior to the serpent’s temptation and man’s fall into sin. Aalders mentions “we learn that the development of a sense of shame accompanied their consciousness of guilt resulting from

⁸ Aalders, *Genesis*, 96.

⁹ Aalders, *Genesis*, 97.

¹⁰ Aalders, *Genesis*, 97.

¹¹ Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah*, 137.

transgression. Thus, when we are told that they were not shamed, this can be read as one of the marks of their state of sinlessness.”¹² Adam and Eve did not feel shame, so they did not feel sin from their behavior.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, parents are commanded to raise their children in the instruction of the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 describes God and his requirements of his people, and verses 6 to 9 summarize how the people should respond. Richard Clifford explains that this “confession of faith is called the *Shema* from its opening word, ‘Hear.’”¹³ The Shema connects with the idea of love in these verses. Love is a commitment, just as the people are called to commit their whole lives and hearts to God in verse 5. David F. Payne writes, “Indeed, the whole concept of loving God was drawn from the language of human relationship.”¹⁴

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 revolves around the two ideas of the Shema and the Great Commandment. To love God is to follow God’s Word, which includes the Ten Commandments. Patrick D. Miller writes, “Shema is the first word of Moses’ instruction to the people after the Ten Commandments have come as direct word of God to them and they have requested Moses to stand between them and God, to receive the divine word and then to teach.”¹⁵ Israel hears first, then receive the commandments.

The “hear-receive” pattern is seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. The call to hear is in verse 4, and the command to love God comes in verse 5. The meaning of 6:4 is debated.

¹² Aalders, *Genesis*, 97.

¹³ Richard Clifford, *Deuteronomy: With an Excursus on Covenant and Law*, Old Testament Message 4 (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1982), 47.

¹⁴ David F. Payne, *Deuteronomy*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 48.

¹⁵ Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 170.

However, the thrust of Moses's speech (i.e., the book of Deuteronomy) focuses on the presence of God among his people. For God to dwell among Israel, the people must love him. Their obedience demonstrates that love. Clifford explains the context of this passage: "So the injunction is given at the threshold of the new land that Israel is not to divide its religious attention among several gods, goddesses, and Yahweh. Since there is one deity, Yahweh, all of Israel's attention and energy (whole heart, etc.) is to be directed to him."¹⁶ The people must not reject God, who is one, and must believe and follow his commandment. God is one; there is no other. Therefore, he must be heard and obeyed by his people.

Deuteronomy 6:5 emphasizes the standard of love that God's people should have for him. God demonstrated his love to the Israelites when he delivered them from Egypt and guided them to the Promised Land. Miller says,

The initiate function of the Shema is to identify the one who for this people will be the center of being and value and to begin to characterize the nature of the relationship between God and people. Also, serve to create an identity for this people. 'The Lord is our God,' acclaim is laid on them a confession is made by them that will serve to shape their identity their way in the world in the profoundest way possible.¹⁷

The words "Your God" exact fear in the listeners and demand obedience. Deuteronomy 6:5 demands that the entire being—heart, strength, commitment—be devoted to God.

Second, Miller summarizes Deuteronomy 6:6-9 by saying, "[The] primary commandment is to be taught to the children, . . . [and] the words are to be kept as a sign on one's body, residence, and city."¹⁸ Verses 6 to 9 illustrate the love commanded in verse 5. Broadly, to love God is to be loyal to him yourself and to encourage love and commitment toward God in others. Particularly, parents demonstrate their love for God

¹⁶ Clifford, *Deuteronomy*, 47.

¹⁷ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 98.

¹⁸ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 104.

and their commitment to him by instructing their children in the Lord. Children are gifts from God, and he desires them to be instructed in the Word of God. Parents are the best and primary influencers in their children's lives, for they live together and have a unique relationship. Thus, children will follow their parents' teaching and influence in the home more than any others' influence. Therefore, God gives parents the important responsibility of instructing their children in the Lord for the next generation.

Verses 8 and 9 describe how families must treat the Law of God and how they must keep the Law, particularly in the home. According to Deanna Thompson, "The Shema is the first prayer a Jewish child learns, and it is recited each morning and evening by Jews throughout the world."¹⁹ Thompson continues, "The Great commandment moves in verse 7 to the command that Israel pass down these teachings, reciting them 'when [they] are at home and when [they] are away and when [they] lie down and when [they] rise.'"²⁰ Israel continued to spread the Word of God to keep and influence the next generation. Thus, parents should pass on their faith legacy for the next generation.

Ephesians 5

God established specific roles for husbands and wives. An exegesis of Ephesians 5:22-33 will assist the thesis that the wife should respect her husband, and the husband should lead his household and love his wife like the Lord loved the church. A set of parents is composed of a father and a mother who submits to her husband. Ephesians unpacks the relationship between husband and wife, comparing it to the relationship between the church and Christ. While this provides the meaning and purpose of marriage, Paul's letter to the Ephesians also provides guidance to married couples regarding their roles in the family. Andrew T. Lincoln's outline of Ephesians 5:22-33 is helpful moving

¹⁹ Deanna A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 76.

²⁰ Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 78.

forward:

The wife-husband relation is set out in vv 22, 23a and supported by exposition of the Christ-church relationship in vv 23b, 24a. Human marriage is the focus of vv 24b, 25a, and Christ and the church again provide a warrant in vv 25b-27. What is said about this relationship in turn supplies the model for the attitude of the husband to his wife called for in vv 28, 29, which is compared once more in vv 29b, 30 to the way in which Christ and the church relate. The two relationships are brought together in vv 31, 32 via the reference to Gen 2:24, and the writer finally underlines his main purpose by summarizing his instruction on marriage in v 33.²¹

Marriage as defined in Ephesians 5 is the starting point for understanding the roles of parents and children.

Wives

Wives are called to respect their husbands; it would help to clarify the nature of this respect. In his commentary on the same verse, F. F. Bruce writes, “There is no special emphasis on the pronoun ‘own’ in ‘your own husbands.’ It might be said that we have here an instance of the ‘exhausted’ use of this pronoun, but it seems to have been a feature of household code.”²² The parallel passage in Colossians 3:18 says, “Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” The last phrase, “as is fitting in the Lord,” indicates at least two reasons the wife is to submit to her husband: (1) for the sake of following the Word of God and (2) for investing in a good relationship with her husband.

Another reason the wife must submit to her husband is because she is to model the church’s posture before Christ. The church is called to be holy, pure, and blameless. One way a wife seeks the same purity and holiness is by submitting to her husband as the church submits to Christ. First Peter 3:6 also mentions wives are to submit to their husbands “like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her

²¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary 42 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 2005), 352.

²² F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 385.

daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.”

Elsewhere, the Bible uses the metaphor of the body to describe the relationship between husband and wife. First Corinthians 11:3, for example, establishes that the husband is the *head* of the wife. The discussion that follows will focus on the husband’s headship over his wife, but it is to establish another reason the wife is to submit to her husband. So, although the topic will focus more on the husband, the overall subject is on the wife.

“Head” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 means source or origin, hearkening back to God’s creation order wherein woman came from the man (Gen 2:21-24). That God gave headship to Adam early on is seen when God gave him authority over naming the animals. Neufeld shares, “Marriage is here combined with the image of body and head. Body as a metaphor for church is found earlier in Ephesians. And is familiar from earlier Pauline letters, notably Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.”²³ As the church is a body with Christ as its head, husbands and wives are a body (one flesh) with the husband as the head. By using this metaphor, Paul in Ephesians and elsewhere highlights the significance of marriage.

Neufeld further explains the meaning of “head”: “Like subordination, head can have several meanings [‘Head’]. It can imply superior status and authority, and it can mean ‘origin’ (or ‘source’).”²⁴ Based on this definition, a wife is obligated to follow her husband and acknowledge his authority as the head of the household. Lincoln agrees, saying, “The ὅτι, ‘for,’ is to be noted. The link suggests fairly clearly, therefore, that for the writer the husband’s headship, especially when seen in the light of the analogy with Christ’s headship in the second half of the statement, involves a role of authority.”²⁵

²³ Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 256.

²⁴ Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 256.

²⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 368.

Husbands can have authority and become leaders when they learn God's word and lead their wives into God.

Headship involves authority of the husband over his wife. Lincoln continues, “κεφαλῆμ, head, is used with the significance of leader or ruler, which it sometimes has in the LXX, to express Christ’s supremacy and authority over the cosmos.”²⁶ Jesus Christ came to the world through incarnation to save God’s people. However, Christ instructed discipleship through his death. Therefore, just as Christ is the head of the church, so the husband is the head of his wife, holding a position of authority.

In summary, wives are to submit to their own husbands (1) in obedience to the Lord and his Word, (2) in imitation of the church’s posture before Christ, and (3) out of respect of her husband’s God-given headship. Lincoln concludes from Ephesians 5:24, “The exhortation repeated in v 24 and reinforced with ἐν παντί, ‘in everything,’ shows there is to be no limit to the submission expected of wives, just as there is no limit to the Church’s obedient service of Christ.”²⁷ Lincoln continues, “So, in this writer’s vision of Christian marriage what is called for from wives is complete subordination to complete love.”²⁸ Without the wife’s subordination, the husband cannot accomplish his responsibilities to lead and love his wife.

Husbands

Ephesians 5 lays out the husband’s responsibilities in much more detail than its parallel passage in Colossians. While Colossians includes more exhortation for the behavior of wives, it only uses about ten words for its exhortation for husbands. However, Ephesians uses about 143 words in its directions for husbands. In Ephesians 5,

²⁶ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 360.

²⁷ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 353, 373.

²⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 353, 373.

Paul exhorts husbands and wives in their respective roles in their marriages, emphasizing they are to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church. The husband's leadership and authority should be characterized by service, for Jesus did not come to be served but serve and give his life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28). Bruce Barton says, "Some Christians have thought that Paul was negative about marriage because of his counsel in 1 Corinthians 7:32-38. These verses in Ephesians, however, show a high view of marriage. Here marriage is not a practical necessity or a cure for lust but a picture of the relationship between Christ and his church."²⁹

Paul's command in verse 26 for husbands to wash their wives in the Word alludes to baptism. The husband washes his wife with the Word of God as a means to sanctify her, to make her holy. Barton states that the "external washing [of baptism] symbolized the more important inward cleansing from sin and the participial clause, calling on his name."³⁰ Second Corinthians 7:1 describes sanctification, saying, "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." Although perfect holiness cannot be attained until a believer dies and enters the presence of God, sanctification is the goal for which a husband and wife purify themselves by the Holy Spirit. God is the only Savior for believers, but he desires to use husbands and wives to aid in each other's sanctification. Psalm 45:13 says, "All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold." Sanctification, or cleansing, is necessary to achieve holiness and blamelessness.

Based on the nature of sanctification, however, some may believe that "we cannot correctly speak of the church being now the bride; rather it is what she shall be."³¹

²⁹ Bruce B. Barton et al., *Ephesians*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1996), 114.

³⁰ Barton et al., *Ephesians*, 387.

³¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 371.

But Lincoln responds, “This ignores the fact that later in v 32 the one flesh marriage union is applied to the present relationship between Christ and the church and that throughout the passage the past and present relationship between Christ and his church is the model for husbands and wives to follow in their marriage.”³²

Ephesians 5:28 continues, “In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” Barton states, “The words ‘loves himself’ probably look back to the words of Jesus to love your neighbor as yourself.”³³ Focusing on the use of the word “love,” Neufeld says, “The term employed for love here is *agape*, a term often set over against the rather ‘cool’ *philla*, friendship love, or the ‘hot’ *eros*, sexual love.”³⁴

Verse 29 shows that love between husband and wife thinks about their one-flesh union. Barton expounds on this, saying, “[To] love one’s wife is not merely a matter of loving someone else as oneself, it is in effect loving oneself as Adam recognized Eve as bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”³⁵ The husband is obligated to love his wife as he does his own body. Lincoln explains, “The use of σώμα, ‘body,’ here suggests that the comparison might well already be associated in the writer’s mind with his major analogy of Christ’s love of his body.”³⁶ Christ nourishes and tends to the church, for it is his own body. Likewise, the husband nourishes and tends to his wife, for she is his own body (Gen 2:24). Barton illustrates the concept of nourish: “θάλπειν, to nourish, was used by Paul in 1 Thess 2:7 of a nurse’s care of children.”³⁷ F. F. Bruce’s words summarize Ephesians 5:28-30 well:

³² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 371.

³³ Barton, *Ephesians*, 116.

³⁴ Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 261.

³⁵ Barton et al., *Ephesians*, 391.

³⁶ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 371.

³⁷ Barton et al., *Ephesians*, 379.

One should love neighbor—and preeminently one’s wife—as oneself. Christ’s love for his “neighbor,” and preeminently for the church is paradigm for a husband’s love of his wife; the paradigm is made the more effective by importing into it the thought of the church as the body of Christ, already expounded in this letter together with the thought of individual believers as members of his body.³⁸

Paul then quotes Genesis 2:24 in verse 31, reestablishing that a man must leave his parents to marry his wife and become one flesh with her. Neufeld says, “This citation from the creation narrative captures well the ambience of love and serves the present context well.”³⁹ Neufeld elsewhere states, “[Flesh] and body interact in unusual fashion. Normally in Pauline letters, flesh opposes spirit (pneuma). People will leave from mother and father to marry with one another.”⁴⁰ Paul uses this citation from Genesis to support what he has already said about the intimate, one-flesh, one-body union between husband and wife. The profundity, according to Paul, lies in the fact that these principles apply to the union between Christ and the church (Eph 5:32). Lincoln states, “The writer’s exhortations to marriage partners are closely related to what he has said earlier in the letter about the relationship of Christ and the church and about the church’s calling in the world.”⁴¹ Lincoln’s observation demonstrates the theme of the Christ-church relationship is present in the entire book of Ephesians.

Conclusion: Ephesians 5

Speaking on 5:32, Lincoln notes, “This mystery is great, with μέγα, ‘great,’ indicating the mystery’s significance and profundity. There is much discussion, however, whether μυστήριον, ‘mystery,’ has a meaning distinct from its other uses in this letter. Some hold that it is a reference to marriage, as such from which mystical and symbolic truth is to be drawn.”⁴² The main point of Ephesians 5:22-33 is that marriage between a

³⁸ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 392.

³⁹ Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 264.

⁴⁰ Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 260.

⁴¹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 352.

⁴² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 380.

husband and wife is meant to symbolize the relationship between Christ and the church. Marriage demands equal interaction between the husband and wife, in which the wife respect her husband and the husband loves his wife through sacrifice. The wife submits to her husband, and the husband must not be bitter toward his wife. Verse 33 says, “However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” Paul’s summary in verse 33 illustrates the covenantal love taught in Scripture and required in marriage.

Ephesians 6

Exegesis of Ephesians 6:1-4 will assist the thesis that children should obey their parents, and parents should maintain a good relationship with their children. Verse 1 clearly shows Paul’s subject changed from marriage to children. The parent-child relationship relies on the foundation of the husband-wife relationship. Ephesians 6:1-4 commands children to obey and honor their parents and commands parents to not make their children angry.

Ephesians 6:1-3

The fifth commandment instructs children to rely on and obey their parents, whom God has given as authority over them. “Obey” simply means to do what is commanded, and “honor” means to love and respect. Paul’s command in Ephesians 6:1 adds that children need to obey their parents “in the Lord.” In Colossians 3:20, Paul puts it, “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” Within the family structure, children’s role is to obey their parents who are wiser and more experienced than they are. Neufeld discusses the fifth commandment, stating, “Obedience is thus one expression of a larger honoring of parents. It is true that the law as a dividing wall has been broken down; yet as guide for those who are in the Lord, it is still in

force.”⁴³

F. F. Bruce posits, “The chief point of the quotation of the fifth commandment may be to confirm that obedience to parents is right.”⁴⁴ The commandment spoken directly to children is a divine ordinance from Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:4

God requires fathers (and mothers) to be consistent in their training of children. Exegesis of Ephesians 6:4 will assist the thesis that the father should not provoke his children but disciple them toward God.

Concerning parents’ responsibility to raise their children in the Lord, Exodus 20:4-6 serves as a somber warning:

You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Christian parents must teach and instruct their children from Scripture so that they know who God is and what he has done through the person and work of Christ. Thus, the goal of parents’ discipline is to train their children to know and love God. Sometimes, parents fail to train their children in this way because they do not want to put in the effort, and they lack self-control. Lincoln states, “Children’s duty to obey parents was . . . taken for granted throughout the ancient world.”⁴⁵ But it is imperative, when parents instruct their children, that they should demonstrate love and self-control. Children may not always be emotionally aware, depending on their age, but they can sense when their parents’ “instruction” is abusive.

⁴³ Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 268.

⁴⁴ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 398.

⁴⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 402.

On verse 4, Lincoln writes of some fathers' natural inclination to provoke their children, saying, "A father is empowered to upbraid or beat his children to impose harsh punishment on them and keep them locked up."⁴⁶ Some parents, perhaps, treat their children in this way in an effort to control the child's decisions, desiring them to go the "right way." But no matter how hard the parents try, they cannot control their children's life choices. God commands parents to abstain from harsh treatment of their children. When fathers or parents lack self-control as they discipline their children, they will make mistakes with their children, provoking resentment—not obedience—from them. Bruce says, "As in Col. 3:21, fathers (or parents) are urged not to assert their authority over children in a manner more calculated to provoke resentment than ready obedience."⁴⁷

Although 6:4 can be applied to parents in general, Paul writes to fathers specifically. Barton explains, "In Jewish families, the fathers were responsible for the education of the children. Paul did not have to establish the father's authority; rather, his aim was to set the limits on harsh treatment."⁴⁸ Just as the man exercises headship over his wife, he also exercises headship over his children. The father is ultimately the one responsible for his family's management and well-being. However, fathers—and parents in general—should not abuse their children through their authority. Lincoln explains, "They are not to abuse their authority by making their children angry. Instead, their rearing of their offspring should be marked by the sort of training and verbal admonition that is determined by their relationship to their Lord and that educates their children in the tradition about this Lord."⁴⁹

How are fathers to instruct their children? Ephesians 6:4 says fathers are to

⁴⁶ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 400.

⁴⁷ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 398.

⁴⁸ Barton et al., *Ephesians*, 122.

⁴⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 409.

“bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” On the words “training” and “instruction,” Neufeld writes, “Both terms relate to instruction, with “paideia” carrying an overtone of discipline. In other words, parents must both teach and explain God’s Word (positive), and confront and punish sin (negative). Both reflect the gravity of responsibility a parent carries for the moral and spiritual development of children.”⁵⁰ Along the same lines, Bruce explains, “J. A. Robinson compares the injunction to a parent in *Didache* 4.9, ‘you shall not withhold your hand from your son or daughter but teach them the fear of God from their youth up.’”⁵¹ As Creator, God has authority and power over all creation. It follows, then, that God uses his authority to bless those who believe and obey him, and punish those who disbelieve and disobey him. In the same way, fathers must exercise oversight to discipline and instruct their child when he violates their parent-child relationship. Although the task of disciplining and instructing children in the Lord is important, it is equally important that the task be done in love so as to build up.

Conclusion

God established the family union when he created Adam, and then created Eve to help Adam in his loneliness. Adam and Eve had different roles in supporting each other. Children should follow the instruction in the Shema, which is a confession of faith. Thus, they need to follow God to show their love for God. Also, parents need to teach their children about God. Ephesians 6:1-4 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

⁵⁰ Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 270.

⁵¹ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 399.

Husbands and wives have God-given roles. Wives need to submit to their husbands and respect their husbands as they fear God. Men have the responsibility of headship and authority at home. The husband should make it his priority to help sanctify his wife and love his wife as his own body. Children should obey their parents, and they need to have a good relationship with God. Parents have a responsibility to teach their children to develop their faith.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLES OF PARENTS AND THE CHURCH IN THE FAMILY MINISTRY MODEL

Parents and church leaders have different roles to disciple their children. Leaders in the church need to teach and support the parents to influence their children unto God. Parents have the responsibility to disciple their children. In *Family Ministry Field Guide*, Timothy Paul Jones insists that parents need to disciple their children at home and the church needs to support the parents.

The Church Must Provide Family Discipleship

Before the church teaches about family ministry, it should know the meaning of family ministry. Jones defines family ministry as, “The process of intentionally and persistently coordinating a ministry’s proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as primary disciple makers in their children’s lives.”¹ It may be helpful for the church to prepare a cooperation among the pastors, parents, congregation, and children to develop their children’s ministry. Also, parents must recognize that they are disciple makers and need to train their children.

Vern L. Bengtson says, “Those Millennials who grew up in a family that emphasized religious education seem to have a much more solid grasp of the history and theology of their faith.”² Millennials who grew up in Christian families do not leave the church because they know God exists and have a fear of God. They recognize they will

¹ Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 33.

² Vern L. Bengtson, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48.

go to hell if they leave God. Bengtson exhorts, “Focus on the family as a unit—much more than most congregations do today.”³ Many parents do not take up the responsibility to disciple their children. They just believe God will accept their children’s faith. Parents need to think about family faith like a unit. They can gather at home to worship God. Jesus Christ wants parents to lead their children to God, to lead them spiritually from the home. Therefore, parents need to have a plan to lead the spiritual formation of their children.

The church has a role to lead parents and children in the congregation, taking opportunities to build good relationships with them. Haynes says, “The church was never intended to be a substitute for the home. Helping children grow in their relationship with God is a biblical partnership that involves the family and the church.”⁴ After pastors disciple and teach parents in the church, the parents need to take the time to lead their children at home every day. Jones says, “The overwhelming majority of Christian parents are not actively engaged in any sort of battle for their children’s souls.”⁵ Parents typically do not connect easily with children’s souls, so they need to know their own souls first with the help of the church.

The church can also provide questions to parents from the book *Shift* around the time of the baby’s dedication to attempt knowing their mindset in parenting:

Using Deuteronomy 6:4-9 as the model for the ceremony, parents are asked four questions. “Will you choose this day to live with the commands of God on your own hearts?” “Do you accept responsibility as your child’s primary faith influencer to impress the truth and love of God on her as you live life together?” “Will you love this child with the unconditional love of Christ?” “Will you pray for her to know Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior?” Parents answer, “We do” as a response to each question.⁶

³ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 202.

⁴ Haynes, *Shift*, 37.

⁵ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 25.

⁶ Haynes, *Shift*, 54.

When parents allow themselves to be positively motivated for their children’s discipline, the church can teach how to discipline their children through those questions. Questions such as those in the quote above can reveal the parents’ circumstances and mindsets.

Jones asks, “So what’s the problem with allowing retention rates to drive revisions in a ministry model? Simply that it turns the visible growth and maintenance of a local congregation into the primary focus instead of Jesus and the gospel.”⁷ The congregation needs to be the leadership’s primary focus, to share the gospel and talk about Jesus Christ’s redemption. Families’ primary goal is to share the gospel with their children and be a light in the darkness. Thus, the members of the church—parents, pastors, and other members of the congregation—need to know their goal is first to be a light for the gospel.

The family ministry model helps develop children’s faith, which can help parents reach a connection with their children. Jones says, “In a family-based church calendar, you’re likely to find everything from a father-daughter banquet to a community outreach event where older and younger folk serve together; from a mother-son date night to a family ministry mission trip or family camp in addition to youth mission trip and youth camp.”⁸ When children observe their parents sharing the gospel, they will feel the need to talk more about God. Also, outreach can help children see their parents’ points of view and share their testimony with their parents.

Jones describes the family-integrated ministry model: “Finding insufficient biblical foundations for age-organized ministries, proponents of family integration make every activity and event intergenerational. That’s right: no nurseries, no age-graded classes, no youth groups, and no senior adult outings. The entire congregation is

⁷ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 50.

⁸ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 130.

restructured to require parents, and particularly fathers, to disciple their households.”⁹ Members need to integrate ages and households to foster discipleship within households. Age-specific classes and events are limited in benefiting whole households and deprive unmarried people from gleaning wisdom and discipleship from others outside their sphere of singleness.

Jones continues, “The essence of family-equipping ministry is the implementation of this gospel-centered identity first in our homes and then beyond our home. The gospel is to be rehearsed in our home and reinforced in our churches so that it can be revealed with integrity to the world.”¹⁰ Just as students learn and study at school then come home to continue their studying, so also children need to listen to the sermon at church and return home to rehearse the gospel with their parents.

The church needs to participate in the family-equipping model to help parents and children be lights in the darkness. As part of this goal, parents need to know the fear of God from the Scriptures within the community of the church. Timothy Paul Jones and Bryan Nelson write, “First, churches must empower the parents to participate in the discipleship of their children. The second priority is to equip the extended family of the church so that the generations build relationship with one another.”¹¹ The church needs to have good relationships with the parents to know each family’s circumstance and equip them to discipline their children.

Also, each leader in the church needs to advocate for households so each household can receive encouragement from the congregation and motivation to discipline their children. Robert Plummer writes, “One of the New Testament qualifications for men

⁹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 131.

¹⁰ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 144.

¹¹ Timothy P. Jones and Bryan Nelson, introduction to *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 25.

to be elders or deacons in the church is the capacity to manage a household well.”¹²

Elders and deacons can help households through their encouragements and prayers. The elders at MyungSung Church have spiritual more maturity than others in the congregation, thus a household would listen to an elder’s advice more than a deacon’s. Therefore, elders need to support households.

The church needs to provide instruction for families because parents do not automatically know detailed instructions on how to go on their way from a regular worship service. Randy Stinson notes,

Churches should provide intensely practical instruction on how to call your family together for regular worship. This kind of training should include a live demonstration and then opportunities for men to practice and be observed in the process. Most men just need a clear plan with detailed instruction. The church is perfectly equipped and positioned to offer this kind of help.¹³

In addition, the church needs to develop appropriate classes for parents to encourage them when parenting gets difficult.

The church also can encourage parents to have family worship with their children, because parents can more easily lead their children when they are familiar with their children’s hearts and circumstances. Mark Holmen says, “Even fewer families—1 out of every 20—have any type of worship experience together with their kids, other than while they are at church during a typical month.”¹⁴ Family worship can provide good experiences, and family members can remember those good experiences in family worship and recognize that they are happy to believe God.

Many young adults leave the church as soon as they finish high school because they no longer have the motivation to attend. Holmen states, “The Southern Baptist

¹² Robert L. Plummer, “Bring Them up in the Discipline and Instruction of the Lord: Family Discipleship among the First Christians,” in Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 51.

¹³ Randy Stinson, “Male and Female He Created Them: Gender Roles and Relationships in Biblical Perspective,” in Stinson and Jones, *Trained in the Fear of God*, 87.

¹⁴ Mark Holmen, *Church + Home: The Proven Formula for Building Lifelong Faith* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2015), 27.

Convention reports that they are currently losing 70 to 88 percent of the young people after their freshman year in college . . . and the young people may never come back.”¹⁵ One reason young adults leave is because they claim Christians are hypocritical, their behavior differing between church and home. Parents need to think intentionally about their behavior and speech because their children are listening and watching. Holmen states, “Many 18- to 29-year-olds believe Christianity is hypocritical because the version of Christianity they experienced was ‘done’ only at church and not at home.”¹⁶

The younger generation focuses on the behavior of churchgoers, such as their pastors, deacons, and parents. The young ones evaluate the behavior of those in the church and decide whether to follow Christianity. Therefore, it is critical that the church prepare a system to lead parents to disciple and guide their children.

Parents should also know that God provides them with the church as their primary help in parenting. Thus, they need an intimate relationship with the church. In many cases, Holmen says, “parents will quickly turn to TV and radio shrinks, the Internet, counseling and even medication to help them as a family, but the church isn’t even a blip on their radar.”¹⁷ When parents mostly watch TV, listen to the radio, and scroll the internet, their children will follow in their footsteps and will not talk with each other. That is the reason the children do not exhibit faithful behavior. Parents are accountable for their children, so they should share their children’s circumstances and spiritual conditions with the church.

Another tool the church can use to motivate parents is a parenting seminar. When each parent is motivated to parent their children well, those parents can then influence other parents who do not want to participate in discipling their children. J. Edward Hakes

¹⁵ Holmen, *Church + Home*, 28.

¹⁶ Holmen, *Church + Home*, 29.

¹⁷ Holmen, *Church + Home*, 41.

states,

When asked whether their churches had helped them to develop any plans for their children's spiritual growth, nearly 60 percent of churched parents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while an additional 17 percent somewhat disagreed. Only 7 percent could state without any reservation that their churches had helped them to plan for spiritual growth in their children's lives.¹⁸

The church must be proactively involved in discipling and equipping parents. The church must use family ministry to show parents how to utilize good discipline in their homes.

Parents Disciple the Next Generation

Trust Church Leaders

Parents should trust the leaders of their church which has a doctrine, and life, and faithfully teach God's word and follow their instruction. Sometimes, parents doubt their church leadership because the parents have an individualistic mindset. However, if leaders, parents, and the church do not cooperate with each other, they will not impact their children's mindset toward God and Christianity. If parents doubt and distrust God, they will not construct a beneficial program for their children.

The late-Boomer generation has increased in the individualistic mindset, so they distrust God more than early Boomers. Individualism increases with each new generation, which may also account for each generation's increased doubt toward the existence of God. Bengtson says, "'Seeing is believing.' In part because faith is intangible and cannot be seen, Tracy and other Gen Xers like her have fundamental doubt about the existence of God."¹⁹ Thus, parents need to address their own doubt toward God and church leadership so they can teach their children to dispel their doubt and develop their faith. It is important for a doubting person to realize that one cannot see air, thoughts, or emotions. However, people know these things exist. Realizing this, children

¹⁸ J. Edward Hakes, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 107.

¹⁹ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 43.

can recognize that God exists and change their minds to believe in him.

Take Responsibility Seriously

Parents must also remember their role and responsibility to prevent different religious affiliations among their children. Holmen states, “The most significant religious influence for Christian teens today is . . . Mom. The second most significant religious influence for Christian teens today is . . . Dad. . . . Significant religious influence number three was a grandparent, followed by friends and siblings.”²⁰ Parents are at the top of the order of spiritual influencers. Parents spend more time with their children more than anyone else since they share a home with them. Thus, children will trust and believe their parents more than others.

Bengtson notes, “In a recent national survey 44% of Americans said they did not have the same religious affiliation today that they had when they were growing up.”²¹ Although God mentions parents’ duties toward their household and that they are the primary influencers at home, many of today’s parents are not good influences in leading their children to God and thereby fail to impart their faith to their children. On the other hand, Bengtson continues, “[sixty] percent of Baby Boomer parents and their children share the same religious affiliation (or nonreligion) at a time when most Americans perceive that cultural and historical forces have been eroding family influence.”²² Whether for good or for ill, parents heavily influence the religious or non-religious path their children take. Either the parents identify as Christians but fail to effectively impart Christianity to their children, or the parents successfully influence their children to follow their non-religious footsteps.

²⁰ Holmen, *Church + Home*, 32.

²¹ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 55.

²² Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 60.

Transmitting the Christian religion to children is highly important, and the responsibility for this fall on fathers and mothers. Bengtson states, “If the parents are not themselves involved in religious activities, if their actions are not consistent with what they preach, children are rarely motivated to follow in their parents’ religious footsteps.”²³ Children watch their parents’ behavior. If parents do not practice what they preach and follow the Word of God, children think they are hypocritical, and parents thereby lose credit with their children. Parents should know that successfully passing down Christianity to their children depends on how they invest their time in their children.

Invest in the Children

The stake theory suggests that when parents invest their love, time, energy, and money in their children, their parent-child relationship flourishes. However, when parents do not invest time in their children, children and parents will grow apart. Bengtson says, “But what is really interesting is that, for religious transmission, having a close bond with one’s father matters even more than a close relationship with the mother.”²⁴ Fathers need to think of their children when deciding what to do or say or how to spend their time, because the father’s influence can easily motivate his children to follow Christ. Same gender parent-child relationships, especially that between a father and son, can benefit from their commonalities, physical and otherwise. Therefore, for example, a father can influence his son easily.

When a mother has a healthy relationship with her children (usually a more emotional relationship), their similar religion rate is 30 percent higher. However, when a father has a healthy emotional relationship with his children, their similar religion rate is

²³ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 72.

²⁴ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 76.

only 6 percent. When God created man and woman, he made women to be more nurturing than men. For some children, a healthy emotional relationship with their mother can positively influence them to follow her religion.

Maintain Family Harmony

Before parents teach their children, they should know they must not ignore or provoke them. Sometimes, when parents advise or exhort their children, they are angry and cannot control their emotions, so they shout at their children or even sometimes hit their children. Plummer writes, “Disharmony in family relationships is a sign of our fallenness. Children are exasperating and disobedient. Parents are harsh, neglectful, even evil, all because our world is broken.”²⁵ Parents and children are broken because of sin, so each must intentionally work to maintain family unity. Parents need to take the time to address and calm their emotions before talking with their children. Children should respect and obey their parents. Parents also should respect each other. The husband should love his wife, and the wife should respect her husband.

Train and Disciple Children in the Scriptures

Once parents understand the weight their influence holds in their children’s religious decisions and the importance of investing in their children, parents must begin by teaching and disciplining their children in the Scriptures. Plummer says of faithful Christian parents, “They viewed passages in the Old Testament about the importance of parents passing on spiritual truth to their children as authoritative divine instruction.”²⁶ Parents need to provide spiritual truths in order to grow a Christian family. Haynes says, “Parents teach their children how to love God by loving God in front of them. Parents

²⁵ Plummer, “Bring Them Up,” 47.

²⁶ Plummer, “Bring Them Up,” 49.

intentionally impress the truth of God on their children. Nothing fancy. Beautifully simple.”²⁷

As the primary faith influencers on their children, parents need to equip the next generation with and by the Word of God. Referring to the commands in Deuteronomy 6, Jones states, “These commands for parents to nurture their children are referred to as *Shema*. The *Shema* included the truths about God, which the children of God were to learn for themselves and then instill in their children.”²⁸ Children will grow spiritually by knowing the truth of God related in the *Shema*. Children cannot instinctively make good decisions, so they rely on and follow their family. Therefore, parents can easily teach them the truth of God in the *Shema*.

Parents need to be in tune with their children’s minds, hearts, and personalities in order to invest their love and the Scriptures into them more effectively. In part, this will look like periodically sharing the story of the Bible—creation, fall, redemption, and consummation—and having regular faith talks with their children based on the Scripture (more on faith talks in a section below). With each of their child’s milestones—growth, understanding, circumstantial, and so forth—parents must meet them where they are and teach them how God and the Bible relate to them there. Parents can attend milestone seminars to help with this. Parents should seek to be a source of wisdom and refuge for their children in order to foster their faith in God. An important part of this is admitting to their children where they, the parents, failed to follow God’s Word. Transparency is vital in influencing children positively toward God.

On a practical note, parents can attend the Milestone Four seminar to help them know how to spiritually train their sixth graders. Haynes mentions, “Milestone 4 requires the church to equip parents to model purity for life and teach the core

²⁷ Haynes, *Shift*, 34.

²⁸ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 42.

competencies of biblical purity, healthy friendships, identity in Christ, and God-honoring sex.”²⁹ They will learn that many children need to mature their own minds spiritually in God in addition to their parents’ training. Parents can then join the purity commitment for this seminar and read their signed commitment in front of their child.

A Different Approach

When parents think about influencing their children toward God, they need to know that their children are not only their children. They are, or may become, their brothers and sisters in Christ. Jones mentions, “When the whole story of God frames every part of a family’s existence, parents don’t just see their children as son and daughters. They also see their children as potential or actual brothers and sisters in Christ. When parents see their children not only as their children but also as their brothers and sisters, it changes everything.”³⁰ When parents make this change in their approach, the children will feel respected by their parents and be more inclined to accept what their parents teach.

Discipleship Strategies

Strategies for discipling children will vary by family. Some parents choose to read the Bible to their children and pray for them during breakfast. Jones describes choosing this strategy for his family: “What I was doing at that time to disciple my daughters, I did because I vaguely recalled bedtime prayers with my mother that continued into my teenage years, as well as daily Bible readings at the breakfast table when I was a child.”³¹ Parents who grew up with Christian parents themselves have past experiences of reading the Bible and praying at bedtime and can implement those same

²⁹ Haynes, *Shift*, 77.

³⁰ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 71.

³¹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 106.

habits in their own families.

Also, churches in South Korea have dawn worship services. Thus, many pastors will charge the congregation of parents to pray for their children after they return home while their children are still sleeping. In such circumstances, children have good experiences with their parents and are reminded of the things of God.

Jones continues, “The mealtime is a time where everyone can be gathered together and united for the same purpose.”³² Mealtimes are good times to gather with family and share the gospel easily. Parents and children are busy. Generally, parents work hard all day and children need to study all day. So, they do not have time to talk with each other. However, busy families will usually gather at mealtimes. Thus, parents can share the gospel while the whole family is gathered for a meal.

The important thing for parents to remember when choosing discipling strategies is they do not need to schedule their faith talks as if they were a program. Parents should make it foundational to use Scripture and prayer but may choose to make things fun and exciting for their children, perhaps with quizzes. Or, in order to teach their children to view their present circumstances through the lens of the gospel and God’s provision, parents may choose to have discussions with them after watching a movie together.

Parents need to find a good place to talk with their children and choose the Bible to disciple their children with. A good place can influence their family to relax and can talk about the Bible easily. Parents and children should read the Scripture and discuss it, with parents asking questions that are fitting for their life and circumstances. Jones emphasizes, “choose an enjoyable place to be together; if possible, make it a weekly tradition where your child goes somewhere or orders some menu item that he or she can’t

³² Timothy Paul Jones and John David Trentham, *Practical Family Ministry: A Collection of Ideas for Your Church* (Nashville: Randall House, 2015), 50.

at any other time.”³³ If children love to go to the park, parents go to the park with children and share the gospel. As a result, children would listen to God’s word in the park more than at home.

Spiritually Growing Families Equip the Church to Train the Next Generation

Those of the World War II generation find it difficult to attend church because of their age. However, they continue praying to God at home and building a religious culture within their household. Bengtson writes, “One thing that comes through clearly in our conversations with members of the depression-born generation is their assumption that God is watching out for them in a very personal way.”³⁴ However, in the 1960s, the early Boomers started transforming ideas of gender and sexuality, with mass media influencing the culture shift as well. Bengtson says, “For many Later Boomers, religious practices such as going to religious services detract from, rather than encourage, a deepening spirituality.”³⁵ It is no wonder that subsequent generations have difficulty passing down the Christian religion to their own children.

If parents do not take responsibility to disciple their children, church leaders need to encourage and motivate them to raise their children in the Lord. Those belonging to Generation X, the generation after Baby Boomers, generally focus their lives on working hard and taking care of their children and parents. Generation X nonbelievers accuse believers of being too easily persuaded to join the religion, while they themselves reject God and concentrate on an independent life. Church leaders must encourage Christian parents to follow Scripture’s command to raise their children in the ways of God, so they can raise the next generation of church leaders.

³³ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 167.

³⁴ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 25.

³⁵ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 37.

Bengtson proclaims, “Gen Xers: religiously independent thinking. Many take temporary breaks from religious practice and feel free to selectively adopt doctrinal beliefs in order to make religion work for them.”³⁶ Generation X was focusing on independent life. Thus, they choose their lives by themselves. Bengtson emphasizes, “Marisol Garsia says that moving away from home required [her] to be more independent about it. If I wanted to continue to grow in my faith and to practice, I had to go to church. And not going to church with Mom on Sunday, that’s a big change. That’s making a decision to go on my own.”³⁷

As already mentioned, fathers must take responsibility for leading their children in this way. The father conveys the Lord’s instruction to his children, which is the mandatory role and responsibility for the father as he follows the Word of God. Plummer writes, “Fundamental to this expectation within the created order is the responsibility of parents to bear and to care for children, feeding them, clothing them, disciplining them, instructing them, and ultimately blessing them as they leave to form their own families.”³⁸ Parents have a biblical obligation to take care of their children and raise the next generation for the Lord.

The Church’s Responsibility

As the church helps parents raise and disciple their children in the ways of the Lord, the church also takes responsibility to train the next generation within the church context. Sunday school classes must teach children about Jesus, salvation, and repentance. Pastors need to share the gospel through their testimony to develop the children’s faith. They can write letters to the children for the future, expressing the desire

³⁶ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 41.

³⁷ Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 41.

³⁸ Plummer, “Bring Them Up,” 46.

and hope for them to follow and serve Christ. And when children profess belief in Jesus Christ and reliance on his forgiveness of their sin, pastors treat that with the significant act of baptizing them.

Leaders and pastors must teach parents about their position as disciple-makers and primary influencers on their children, as Jones explains, “God’s creation and humanity’s fall have positioned parents as providers and disciplinarians. Through redemption and consummation, parents are called to become disciple-makers as well. Because God has chosen to place children in close proximity to us, these disciple-making processes should begin with our own children.”³⁹ Pastors in the church have an obligation to teach parents who are the influencers on their children. Jones stresses again, “Instead of expecting that parents already know how to disciple their children, family-equipping ministries reshape existing activities to equip parents with the skills they need to become primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives.”⁴⁰ All in all, the church’s responsibility is not to replace what God designated for the home, but to “[supplement] and [reinforce] the faith training that occurs in Christian households.”⁴¹

It Takes a Church

The church must gather to worship God, listen and respond to the preached Word, and observe the ordinances of believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper. This regular gathering is God’s ordained means Christian discipleship and church growth. Additionally, it may also be helpful for leaders to prepare Sunday morning classes and small groups to encourage the cooperation of the whole church family toward leaning on the Word of God and investing in the next generation. Becky Arthur writes, “This

³⁹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 80.

⁴⁰ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 116.

⁴¹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 116.

ministry has many avenues to educate our families effectively. This could be accomplished through a Sunday morning class, small groups, church-sponsored worships and seminars or collaborating with another church to offer this type of education.”⁴²

Haynes provides examples from his church:

Small groups function to teach adults the Scripture and to foster community on a weekly basis. Second, each semester a series of Wednesday night classes offers adults the opportunity to dig deeper into the specific aspects of life in Christ and focus in on the core competencies of various milestones. Third, our weekly worship services immerse adults in Scripture and highlight milestone celebrations as they naturally occur.⁴³

In the same effort, churches can integrate grades six through tenth in its curriculum, which can help families teach their children at home. Even though parents are the primary influencers at home, church leaders should prepare small groups to build community cooperation within the congregation. Leaders of small groups can talk to children more and know their personal circumstances to solve their problems and pray for their prayer list.

One example of the church working together for investing in the next generation of Christians is through a family style VBS. Through a “family VBS,” parents are more involved in the education of their children and can know their children more intimately through it. Arthur exhorts, “Discontinue the kids-only VBS. We have restructured our vacation Bible school to be a family VBS so parents are involved, too.”⁴⁴ Parents need to know what the church is doing during VBS and talk about VBS events and lessons at home.

Another avenue of church involvement is a youth retreat. Leaders can prepare these retreats to invest in and grow in their knowledge of the young people in their church.

⁴² Becky Arthur, “Family Connect,” in *Collaborate: Family + Church*, ed. Michael Chanley (Louisville: Ministers Label, 2010), 16.

⁴³ Haynes, *Shift*, 108.

⁴⁴ Arthur, “Family Connect,” 17.

Haynes writes, “We offer a 24-hour fourth-and fifth-grade retreat every year. While each year’s theme is different, we always highlight one or more of the core competencies and specially address issues to help children prepare for adolescence.”⁴⁵ Retreats can help children develop their identity and overcome their current circumstances as adolescents. Another related example of church involvement is a purity weekend.

Family Ministry Vision

When developing student ministries, churches must be cautious of falling into what Jones calls a “false vision.” Jones explains, “This false vision runs something like this: The purpose of student ministry is to gain and retain youth by entertaining them until the time comes for them to serve the church as an adult.”⁴⁶ Pastors and leaders must focus on leading children and youth in Scripture rather than on creating an entertaining hangout session. Teaching them the Bible is of much more importance. Children deprived of Bible teaching will gather anywhere without Christian influence, such as a club.

Pastors need to prepare and share a family ministry vision for the congregation before implementing it. When parents are provided with purpose and motivation through the leadership’s vision, their passion for raising their children in the Lord with their church community will come alive. Church leaders will do well to lean heavily on Ephesians 4:10-16, the key to growing the church toward family ministry and the motivation to cultivate a culture of discipleship through prayer. Ephesians 4:10-16 says,

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead,

⁴⁵ Haynes, *Shift*, 69.

⁴⁶ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 54.

speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Jesus Christ provided the pastor and teacher to teach about the body of Christ.

Also, pastors and teachers need to support their parents to disciple their children and love Christ. Thus, Children can know about Jesus's love and believe in Christ.

Family Ministry Prerequisites

Before leaders try to develop family ministry in the church, they should realize it is a process that takes time. Jones says,

Do not attempt to tie your ministry activities to the primary role of parents until your ministry leaders see the discipleship of their families as a response to God's work in their lives ('be'). Begin applying the TIE test when parents cannot avoid hearing about their primary responsibility for their children's spiritual development ('acknowledge') and when the congregation is providing training for parents and families in faith ('equip').⁴⁷

Before parents jump into discipling their children, leaders should apply the TIE test, which will reveal the parents' responsibility. Jones explains,

Using the worksheet Living in God's Story Line, consider with the family ministry team whether your ministry practices tend more (1) to prepare parents to see their children in light of God's whole story line, or (2) to separate parents from engagement with their children in the movements of redemption and consummation. At least two months before you plan to begin the transition to family ministry.⁴⁸

Another prerequisite for starting a family ministry is to build relationships with the unbelieving parents of children who attend the church. Meeting with them once a month will cultivate opportunities to share the gospel with them. However, it is also important to speak with the believing parents within the church as well, as Jones states, "In a survey of church parents with children under the age of thirteen, 81 percent said that no church leader had ever spoken to them about how parents could be involved in

⁴⁷ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 194.

⁴⁸ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 89.

their children’s spiritual development.”⁴⁹ Leaders need to inform them about spiritual development strategies, such as family worship at home or sharing the gospel at home for spiritual development.

In many families both the father and mother have jobs and are busy, so they believe they do not have time to disciple their children. Jones says, “A little more than half stated that both factors were descriptive of their families: They were too busy, and their church had provided no consistent equipping or encouragement.”⁵⁰ Nowadays, mothers and fathers have jobs and do not have enough time to talk with their children. However, parents should make time to share the gospel because if they do not sacrifice their time, their children will not increase their spiritual faith. Also, after children get older, they do not listen to the advice from their parents.

In summary, Jones states, “Family-equipping ministry is not a program or a curriculum that a church does; it is an expression of our identity in Jesus Christ which calls Christian parents to raise children not only as their children but also as potential or actual brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.”⁵¹ Parents think that family-equipping ministry is merely a program and are not challenged to participate in family ministry equipment, feeling it is difficult and lose motivation easily. Thus, church leaders have the obligation to provide an equipment plan easily and encourage them to join the family ministry plan.

Family Ministry Equipment Model

Jones explains how family ministry equips parents: “The ministry equips parents to engage in (1) faith talks, (2) faith walks, (3) faith processes in their homes, and (4) to become families in faith for spiritual orphans.”⁵² Faith talks between parents and

⁴⁹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 108.

⁵⁰ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 111.

⁵¹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 116.

⁵² Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 152

children will result in faith walks and habitual faith processes in the home. Jones encourages parents to engage their children in designated faith talks “at least once per week, for the household to gather for prayer and to study a biblical truth together.”⁵³ In the family ministry equipment model, leaders need to teach parents how to conduct these faith talks so parents can walk in God’s role for them to disciple their children. Jones recounts some benefits of regular family faith talks:

It can reflect at home the celebration of Christ’s resurrection that happens every week and mark times of worship and ritual throughout the Scripture (Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:15; Deut. 16:9-10). I also find once a week to be sufficiently frequent to make faith talks a habit but not so frequent that parents become burdened with unrealistic expectations if they have never engaged in faith talks before.⁵⁴

Jones exhorts that church leadership must not assume parents know how to disciple their children. That is where the family ministry equipment comes in. He says, “Instead of assuming that parents already know what to do to become primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives, family-equipping ministries intentionally overcommunicate, taking every opportunity to acknowledge parents’ divinely designated role.”⁵⁵

Under the family equipment model, church leaders have the obligation to perform the duties mentioned before, such as teaching family member roles (discussed in chapter 2) and teaching the Bible faithfully to parents so they can pass it down to their children. Plummer writes, “As parents live genuine lives of repentance and faith together in community with other believers, their faith will both be ‘caught by’ and ‘taught to’ each generation.”⁵⁶

Leaders are also to provide young people in the church with church-related

⁵³ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 154.

⁵⁴ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 156.

⁵⁵ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 116.

⁵⁶ Plummer, “Bring Them Up,” 59.

volunteer work experience for the next generation. When these young people invest in the next generation, the children will more easily follow the direction of their parents. Jones states, “Ministry volunteers working with children and students play a vital role, adding validity to the life and teaching of parents and serving as encouragers, coaches, teachers and listener for the next generation.”⁵⁷

Also important in the family ministry equipment model is educating parents on the sexualized culture their children live in or will enter one day. Parents typically do not know how to lead their children because they do not understand their culture. Jones explains, “We are finding that parents do not understand what teens are exposed to in their culture, and they are not tuned in to what their kids are doing on the internet. We offer age-stage-based sexuality classes and resources to support parents as students enter puberty and navigate our sexualized culture.”⁵⁸ Students will experience chaos during their adolescent stage. If parents are not equipped to address the sexualized culture, their children will enter it in a negative way.

Regarding specific church programs working under the family ministry equipment model, Jones praises two of his church’s programs: “There are two big events that have worked for me in a variety of settings. One is Neighbor Outreach Week, and the other is the We Love Kids Banquet.”⁵⁹ The church can develop and support programs like this that will enhance the relationship between parents and children.

Church leaders must teach parents to highlight the principles in Bible stories to their children so the children will be interested in listening to the Bible and remember the principles in their hearts. Also, church leaders need to be sure to care for children whose parents do not come to the church.

⁵⁷ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 27.

⁵⁸ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 32.

⁵⁹ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 47.

Conclusion

Parents need to follow Christ's example in teaching their children at home. Hakes highlights the effectiveness of Jesus' teaching role, saying that even the ways Jesus disputed enemies and addressed opposition were "fruitful means of instruction for modern Christian workers."⁶⁰ As the primary influencers in the home, parents are to take seriously their role as teacher for their children, making sure to teach the Scriptures faithfully. As parents teach the Bible at home, their children will grow in their knowledge of Scripture and in their interest in God.

Church leaders are responsible for faithfully teaching the Bible to parents so parents can have the Word of God planted in their own hearts first. Then leaders are to teach parents *how* to teach the Bible to their children. As Hakes says, "Proper teaching methods and deep personal spirituality are not mutually exclusive; they are compatible."⁶¹

A church's family ministry must also have a leader, or leaders, whose job it is "to evaluate it objectively and direct the training and supervision of teachers and leaders to overcome whatever weaknesses may exist. Furthermore, the presence of a Christian education specialist often encourages more laymen to become active in the work."⁶² Although Hakes is speaking of Christian education generally here, his advice can be applied to family ministry specifically. The church leaders in charge can overcome the weaknesses that exist in the church's ministry to families.

Pastors need to find the spiritual leaders and teachers in the church that can develop family spiritual health through teaching parents. Pastors need to organize the ministry system before choosing the leaders and teachers.⁶³

⁶⁰ Hakes, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education*, 26.

⁶¹ Hakes, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education*, 96.

⁶² Hakes, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education*, 222.

⁶³ Hakes, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education*, 226.

Finally, church leaders must have a good systematic method in place to lead the congregation and particularly parents in the family ministry model.⁶⁴ Leaders and teachers must concede they cannot automatically or immediately pique the church's interest in this type of ministry model. They must take the time to choose appropriate teaching materials to gradually build the church's interest.

⁶⁴ Hakes, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education*, 337.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This project is about helping families enhance the discipleship of their children at MyungSung Church. MyungSung Church still has an age-segmented system in which parents rely on the church and do not have any spiritual intentionality at home. An age-segmented system is that in which children and youth are separated by age groups at church. True, friends need to encourage their peers to attend church. However, the age-segmented system has disadvantages, and family ministry is more advantageous for MyungSung Church. Thus, family ministry could change children's minds and help parents disciple their children at home.

Chapter 2 explains from Genesis how the family was created in Genesis 2:18-25. The church, parents, and children have roles given in the Word of God. Parents need to lead and command their children, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Ephesians 5:22-33 explains about marriage between husbands and wives as a model of Christ and the church. Children need to obey their parents, per the fifth commandment, as seen in Ephesians 6:1-3. Fathers and mothers each have roles to lead their children unto God, as spelled out in Ephesians 6:4. Chapter 2 interprets family ministry through the Word of God.

Chapter 3 discusses the manner of family discipleship and how to increase their children's faith in God. The pastors, congregation, and parents have different roles to implement family discipleship. Chapter 3 provides specific programs, what parents should do at church and home, and how to connect relationships between pastors and parents. Also, pastors need to change the system from age-segmented to family ministry. Pastors can ask the parents to join the program to know the circumstances of the children.

Chapter 4 shares the results of the pre- and post-surveys. Before parents went through the lecture course, they needed to take the Family Discipleship Perception Survey. Then, after completing the lecture course, they took the post-survey to reveal how much they learned about increasing their children's faith in God. This was first time the church held a family ministry lecture. When children increase their faith as a result of their parents attending the lectures, other parents who did not join will be motivated to attend the next time the church conducts family ministry lectures and programs. Each week of lectures had different curriculum that made it easy for parents to learn about family ministry and about how to disciple their children to increase their faith. The first week was like an orientation, and the second week through the seventh week talked about roles, family composition, and influences through the Bible. The last week of the lectures was for the post-survey and for each parent to evaluate their family and determine how to enhance their children's faith.

Pre- and Post-Surveys

This chapter will interpret the project, building up to the conclusion about how effective parents are toward their children's faith in MyungSung Church.

The first goal of the project was to discover what kind of influence the parents have on their children. This goal was met by having the parents fill out the pre-survey, or Family Discipleship Perception Survey, before the parents attended the class.¹ There were twelve people/ 6 marriage in the class. A total of twelve people/ 6 marriages learned through the curriculum how to influence the faith of their children.

The second goal of the project was to develop and teach an 8-week curriculum for parents. After attending these lectures, they completed the post-survey to determine what they learned about how children change and grow their faith. Parents and children

¹ See appendix 1.

must build the family ministry system at home, and children also must respect their parents.

The third goal of the project was to equip parents to disciple their children at home. Parents need to sacrifice themselves. Thus, they need to make the time to have family worship service either one time a week or seven times a week for five minutes after they eat dinner with their children. Also, parents can talk about the sermon with their children after attending the Sunday worship service.

Week One

Before the class began, I chose the five families to participate. The parents who joined the class have a good faith, perhaps because they came to MyungSung Church when they were in the youth group or young adult group. These parents desire to disciple their children unto God because they know that their friends left the church when they were involved in the young adult group themselves. They think that when they were young, their young adult friends came to the church to see friends or have fun. However, after their friends were not fun anymore in church, they left the church since they did not have faith and motivation to come to the church. Thus, the parents of MyungSung Church require many seminars for their children's discipleship. Also, they need help knowing some methods by which to lead and disciple their children.

During the first week of class, I chose the time to have our meetings. We had meetings after worship service at 2:00pm because during the week, the parents needed to work at their companies. After we gathered in church, I provided them with the pre-survey. I needed the results of the pre-survey to know the families' circumstances before proceeding with the lectures. After checking the pre-survey, I provided the syllabus so the participants knew the lesson schedule. I introduced my information, motivated the parents to participate in the class, then took questions from the parents.

When I introduced the syllabus, I explained an overview of the eight weeks of curriculum ahead of us. The first week is orientation. The second week is how man and woman were created and how to create and compose the family through God's Word. The third week teaches who is the influencer on their children at home through Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which talks about responsibility and discipleship. The fourth week teaches how Ephesians 5 explains the roles of husbands and wives in the home, as well as the necessity for a husband and wife to be one flesh. Each one has a different role. The fifth week teaches other family roles, such as father, mother, and children, from Ephesians 6:1-4. Week Six explains the church's role for families. Week Seven equips parents with knowledge of family ministry and how to instruct their children at home. In the eighth week, the leadership introduces the family ministry program to the church and parents fill out the post-survey.

Before I started the second week, I answered questions from the parents about the syllabus. People in MyungSung Church are shy and ashamed to ask questions, so I answered their questions through one-on-one conversations.

Week Two

The second week of class focused on the Creator of the family and how he created it. Genesis 2:18-25 supports the belief that God created the family. In this account, man felt alone and incomplete. All the animals God created were found unsuitable for Adam, so God created woman to assist the man. Animals were not suitable to fulfill the woman's role for Adam. Adam needed to have a good companion to support him, for he was incomplete without a supporter.

The two became one flesh and a family unit. God created Eve from Adam and unified them in marriage, revealing Eve to be Adam's good companion. Thus, marriage is based on Adam and Eve. God also mentions that when a man and woman marry, they should leave their original family to do so.

Genesis 2:18-25 provides people with the motivation to create families.

Specifically, Genesis 2:18, 21-24 illustrates the creation of Eve and how God composed the first family. Genesis 2:18, 21, 22, and 24 says,

The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. . . . So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's rib and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. . . . That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

The meaning behind "rib" in Hebrew has the idea of one's side. The concept of "side" means that the man and woman need to be one flesh together. Eve's rib came from Adam when he was in a deep sleep. Thus, Eve is the wife of Adam. Children do not have the basic knowledge of how to create and compose a family according to God's Word. Thus, it will change the minds of the families to have compassion to join the class.

Week Three

The third week focused on Deuteronomy 6:4-9, discussing the primary influencers within the family upon children. The primary influencers and leaders are parents at home.

In this week's passage from Deuteronomy, we learned that parents are leaders in the family to increase their children's faith toward God. The Shema teaches parents about loving God and proclaiming their faith in their family's lives. Deuteronomy 6:5 emphasizes that God's people should have a good relationship with God, fearing and obeying him. Deuteronomy has a pattern of hearing and receiving. Families should listen to God's Word and share his love with one another. People should not reject God's Word. People should fear God, for he requires obedience. Thus, they need to obey and listen to God's Word.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 explains that parents are to be good leaders toward their children, being responsible to teach them to follow God. Children are gifts from God, and parents need to instruct their children about the Word of God. Also, parents are the

primary leaders to disciple their children because they have a special relationship with them. Parents and children should be committed to loving God as a family. Parents are commissioned by God to instruct their children in the love of God. Parents have the responsibility to lead their children, and children need to follow their parents' commands. Verses 8 and 9 describe that families must follow and maintain the law of God. Israel was to share the Word of God at home constantly, when they rise up and lie down. In addition, parents must always pray for their children. Thus, parents provide a faith legacy to their children to share the gospel with the next generation.

Week Four

The fourth week of class revolved around the individual roles of each parent in the family, as seen in Ephesians 5. Ephesians 5:22 mentions, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." Wives are to respect their husbands, and husbands are to love their wives and lead their families.

Wives. Wives should respect their husbands, which can develop a respect toward their husbands. Wives need to submit to their husbands in the Lord in order to follow the Word of God and to have a good relationship with their husbands. Wives are to model the church's posture before Christ. The church should be holy, kind, and blameless. Also, husbands are given headship over their wives, as seen in 1 Corinthians 11:3. First Corinthians 11:3 proclaims, "But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." The concept of headship is one of authority given to husbands. Thus, wives should follow and respect their husbands since husbands are to model Christ's authority over and love toward the church (1 Cor 11:3).

Husbands. Husbands are charged with leadership and authority in the family based on the relationship of Christ toward the church. Husbands should exercise their

authority through service. Husbands should wash their wives with the Word, meaning they are to aid in sanctifying their wives to make them holy. Both husband and wife need sanctification and must not blame each other. The husband should not ignore his wife, even though he has authority over her. The husband should love his wife as his own body and show agape love in their one-flesh union. Also, a husband and wife have a parallel relationship with that between the church and Christ. Husbands must have sacrificial love for their wives, and wives must respect their husbands, choosing to obey and follow them. In short, they need to become one flesh.

Week Five

The focus of the fifth week was the role of children in family ministry from Ephesians 6:1-4. The fifth commandment introduces children's role in the family, that they should rely on their parents whom God provided as their authority. The fifth commandment proclaims that children must rely on and obey their parents. Children should follow their parents' commands and love and respect their parents. The word "obey" means to do what they are commanded, and "honor" means children are to love and respect their parents.

Related to that, Ephesians 6:4 emphasizes the father's (and mother's) role, that fathers need to train their children without abusing their children through their authority. A father must not provoke his children when he commands and disciplines his children. When parents cannot control their emotions, they will make mistakes toward their children. Parents cannot control their children's life choices. However, parents can instruct and command their children without provoking them to anger. Also, children do not know who God is, so the goal is for the father or mother to instruct and disciple their children to know about God.

Week Six

The focus of the sixth week was the church's responsibility to instruct the parents in its congregation on how to be good influences on their children.

Parents are the primary disciple-makers at home since children are under their authority and follow their opinions. The church's responsibility in family ministry is twofold. First, the church needs to share the knowledge of discipleship to the children in their children's ministry. Second, the church must teach parents about leading their children at home spiritually and that they can particularly do this through conducting worship service at home. When instructing the parents on this, the church can compare it to children's schooling. After children go to school, they rehearse their studies at home through their homework. In the same way, parents can help their children rehearse Sunday sermons at home after church or throughout the week.

Although parents must instruct their children at home, the church needs to have a healthy partnership with the parents, providing family ministry goals to the congregants, parents, and church. In short, pastors should teach and instruct the parents, and parents should invest time into their children to develop their children's faith. When parents do not follow the pastor's instruction, children do not change and increase their faith, so the children do not come to church when they become a young adult. Also, parents need to tell the pastor about their children's circumstances in order to overcome their children's problems. When pastors know about children's circumstances, they can pray to God and provide advice to parents who do not know how to overcome the problem.

Week Seven

The seventh week of class focused on equipping parents to invest in family ministry for the next generation. It is important for the parents to follow the instruction of church leadership in this because the leaders know how to guide parents to influence their

children unto God. Late Boomers tend to distrust leadership and choose individualism, which has no place in the children's program.

The church must equip parents by teaching them specific strategies to disciple their children that involve investing love, time, energy, and money toward the child's growing faith. Parents must teach their children without provoking them, seeing their children as their brothers and sisters in God. The Shema teaches parents to pass on the truth of God to their children and talk about creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. Parents can do this by praying and reading the Bible at mealtimes and by finding good times and places to talk about creeds. Another idea is for parents to pray out loud for their children after attending the dawn worship service so their children can hear their parents' voices praying for them. Also, parents need to choose a good place to go on a family trip to talk about God and share their testimonies.

Week Eight

The final week of class ended on specific strategies for the church to carry out its responsibility to train the next generation. For instance, Sundays should be times of instructing children about Jesus, salvation, and repentance. Other ideas and examples include, first, leaders preparing small groups to cooperate with each other. After students in South Korea finish a class, they can add more classes, which is an option to learn more and study more. Similarly, the church also provides small groups to share the gospel and for attenders to share their circumstances. In this small group setting, leaders can share the good idea for parents to disciple their children and provide different methods to do so.

Second, the church can facilitate a family VBS, which involves the parents so they can see their children in church. If children join VBS without their parents (who rely too heavily on teachers in the church), they will not know how to process their own circumstances or the VBS lessons. However, when parents join VBS with their children, they can know what their children need.

Third, the church can organize youth retreats to address common issues among adolescents. Youth are considered adolescents, and during that phase of life, they do not want to talk with their parents. In their adolescence, youth follow the wrong way and cannot return their lives to God. Thus, pastors and parents need to cooperate on their children's issues, using the retreat to pray and talk to the youth.

I then provided the participants with the post-survey to know how the class affected them,² as well as the curriculum evaluation to see what I should change about the class.³

Part 1 of the post-survey asks about the parental perception, giving parents answer options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Part 2 of the survey asks how often parents have faith talks with their children, with answer options ranging from “never” to “seven or more times.” Additionally, the curriculum evaluation helped me know how the class influenced the participants and whether they accepted the curriculum easily.

After I gathered the information from the pre- and post-surveys and the curriculum evaluation, I conducted a t-test. The t-test provided the witness of evaluation between the pre- and post-surveys. The score was gathered from the pre- and post-surveys to tabulate the mean score. The t-test result determines how parents' minds improved between the pre- and post-surveys.

The scores were calculated from the pre- and post-surveys to find the mean for each participant. The t-test resulted in a mean score out of 90 that increased from the pre-survey to the post-survey (see table 1).

² See appendix 1.

³ See appendix 2.

Table 1. Pre- and post-test results

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean	38.890625	88.828125
Variance	712.566406	2.18098958
Observations	16	16
Pooled Variance	357.373698	
Hypothesized	0	
df	30	
t Stat	-7.4715364	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.2525E-08	
t Critical one-tail	1.69726089	
P(T<=t) two-tail	2.505E-08	
t Critical two-tail	2.04227246	

Furthermore, the participants' curriculum survey resulted in a mean score of 31.67 out of 32. This shows that the participants changed their minds after undergoing the eight-week seminar. The t-test conducted on the pre- and post-surveys reveals that the eight-week lecture period positively influenced and increased the knowledge of the participants.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The final chapter provides an evaluation and analysis of this project's effectiveness, as well as theological and personal reflections and a conclusion.

This project sought to change parents' minds and develop their skills to disciple their own children. To this end, it is important for the church to build a family ministry and equip families to engage in discipleship at home. Parents' discipleship of their children must involve patience, consistency, and discipline toward developing their children's faith. Pastors and other leaders in the church must teach and disciple families on the biblical composition of the family and on how to teach the Bible to their children.

MyungSung Church focuses on an age-segmented model for their children's ministry, in which the pastor discipled the children to believe in God and to lead their friends to church. That is the reason why parents complain to their pastor when children do not come to church. Parents do not fulfill their responsibility to influence their children with the Word of God. Also, parents do not know how to behave toward their children or what to say to them.

Sometimes, parents gossip about their pastors or church congregation, and their children feel negativity and do not want to come to the church. Parents need to learn how to behave and teach in their home. Thus, the senior pastor of MyungSung Church changed his mind and decided that once a year the church will conduct the family ministry seminar for parents who disciple their children at home. The senior pastor recognizes that family ministry is more influential than age-segmented children's ministry. An age-segmented ministry has disadvantages, such as young adults losing the motivation to come to church after they retire from the young adult group. When they are

young, they come with their friends. However, when they reach the young adult group, they lose the fun, and their friends no longer walk in the faith. Thus, they leave the church.

During the project, parents were encouraged to disciple their children at dinner time. They can choose a Christian song to sing or read one chapter in the Bible. The parents had the freedom to choose the frequency, such as once a week or twice a week, because the children may reject the family worship if they feel too much pressure from their parents. Such family worship can help children to change their minds and increase their faith. One family testifies that their family worship influenced their daughter to seek assurance that God lives in her heart.

Churches in South Korea are very conservative. They think family worship must be ten minutes or longer so they can follow the traditional worship service format, which includes Christian songs, recitation of the Apostles' Creed, a sermon, more Christian songs, and the Lord's Prayer. If they do not follow that format, they feel they are not participating in true worship service. However, when families make it a goal to have at least a five-minute worship service, parents and children do not feel they need to maintain a full worship service every week. Therefore, a five-minute family worship time is a good goal that families will not view as a burdensome, extra responsibility.

After family worship during dinner time, children may ask parents questions, such as how to compose a family. Thus, the parents can explain through Genesis how God created Adam and then, to alleviate Adam's loneliness, created Eve out of Adam's rib, which has the meaning of "side." Animals could not support Adam. Thus, God created Eve to support Adam. This is how the first family in the Bible was created.

After parents provide answers to their children's questions, the children will likely decrease their doubts that God lives in their lives even though he is invisible. Thus, children will increase in their faith.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

MyungSung Church facilitated the members of the project to apply family ministry properly. The church's facilitation and support helped the project members (1) discuss family ministry from the Bible, (2) discuss the introduction to and the principle of discipleship at home, and (3) discuss the method of sharing the gospel at home.

Through this project, the parents who participated now understand methods and strategies for influential discipleship of their children at home: (1) How to worship at home, (2) how to approach their children intentionally with a schedule, and (3) how to explain biblically-based family ministry at home. Parents in MyungSung Church now have a new mindset, knowing their responsibility to disciple their children as their children's main influencers. The project was accomplished and fulfilled its purpose.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

There were four goals for the project. The first goal was for MyungSung Church to assess the family ministry discipleship practice. This was necessary because parents in MyungSung Church were not interested in discipling their children, but only focused on their own faith in God. Parents did not know they are the primary influencers on their children but thought their children could just learn the Bible at church. That is a weakness of MyungSung Church. After parents listened to the curriculum, they knew how to lead their children. Parents also were impressed with the desire for their children to go to heaven with them. However, some parents came into the class without confidence in discipling their children who had already graduated middle school or high school, not knowing how to lead them. After they listened to the curriculum, they set their minds to the task and were motivated to lead their children unto God. Thus, family ministry is a good program to help parents influence their children to increase their faith in God.

The second goal was to change the parents' mindset through an eight-session curriculum and to motivate them to disciple their children. God created the family (Gen

2:21, 22) and purposed for the parents to disciple their children unto the Lord at home (Deut 6:4-9). The biblical creation of and purpose for the family motivated the parents in MyungSung Church to change their mindset about family discipleship and to take practical steps toward establishing family worship. This mindset change can influence their children to believe in God. Some parents already have motivation to influence their children. However, most parents do not want to make the necessary sacrifices to have family worship at home because they work hard and after that, they are tired. Thus, after parents eat dinner, they would rather to go to bed because it is a late night. Also, parents are too bashful and passive. In MyungSung Church, the parents have shy characters and they do not take up a role of leadership in their families. Instead, they just follow their children's opinions. Thus, parents need to change their mindset, knowing that parents are to be the leaders at home and to disciple their children.

The third goal was to equip parents to engage in family ministry at home. This was necessary because the parents were not equipped and did not know how to practice family ministry. Rather, the parents just relied on the pastor to provide what their children needed and did not have family worship at home. Parents, pastors, and the congregation need to support each other in the responsibility of raising children in the Lord. Parents should ask pastors how they can practice family worship at home, and pastors need to connect with parents. The church should provide many seminars to teach about family ministry.

Strengths of the Project

The project has several strengths in its subject matter and application for family ministry discipleship. First, the parents who joined the project now understand that they are the primary faith influencers at home. They know they can change and disciple their children to develop their children's faith. Thus, the parents are motivated to disciple their children through family ministry. Parents who have young children observe the

older parents with young adult children who are leaving the things of God. The parents of young children are worried about this, concerned that their own children will leave God when they become young adults and are no longer motivated and feel it unnecessary to attend church. However, the parents recognize that family ministry can change their children's lives, leading them to God and increasing their faith. Thus, as a result of this project, parents are more trusting of the pastor and desire to talk to the pastor about their circumstances, even when the pastor does not take the initiative to inquire about their family.

Second, the parents know about specific methods to share the gospel with their children, such as utilizing dinner time for family worship and biblical conversation. Children cause embarrassment by laughing when their family initially performs a worship service in their own household. However, following such a worship service, the children change their minds and ask about God at home more than they did previously. Parents in South Korea are busy and tired after working at their company, for both fathers and mothers work all week. Therefore, they are not interested in their children's faith and what paths they are taking in life. However, when children change and want to learn about God's Word, parents recognize that they need to sacrifice for their children and invest time to instruct them in the Bible.

Third, the parents know to reach out to the church leadership for help and cooperation in their family discipleship. For instance, parents can ask the pastor for advice about a child's life circumstance or about their child's thoughts and questions. Because the South Korean church has extremely conservative problems and errors, the church and parents do not hold deep conversations. The people of South Korea have a history of being led by a king or ruler, so they just want to be people who follow authority without engaging their own opinions. This cultural mindset is seen in MyungSung Church as well. Pastors will preach, and the congregation will follow it without thinking critically about it or challenging it. This is the reason why congregants

do not raise issues or seek cooperation within the church. Their children cannot be disciplined, though, when the church and parents stop communicating. When MyungSung Church accepts the family ministry model, the church and the parents can have more strength to influence their children toward faith in God. When pastors and parents communicate with each other, they can solve problems biblically. Thus, church-and-parent cooperation is a more positive influence on children to be close with God.

Weaknesses of the Project

Four weaknesses were apparent before the family ministry project began. First, when the family ministry project was announced and families in the congregation were asked to participate, married couples without children felt disappointed and left out. While members of the young generation in South Korea are now usually married, they do not want to spend money to have babies since caring for them is expensive. In addition, those who marry late do not have babies. Married couples without children do not want to come to church.

Second, children whose parents do not attend MyungSung Church also felt left out and disappointed that they do not have spiritual leaders at home. Thus, when parents were called upon to share their family circumstances with the pastor, these children recognized that they were left out. The family ministry project has many influential strengths, but some minorities felt left out and were disappointed they could not join the project. During VBS, I asked their parents to come to the church and play with their children, and I asked teachers to help the children who regularly attend the church. However, one child mentioned that their parents do not come to the church. Thus, children were hurt and disappointed about that circumstance.

Third, mothers and fathers who have been affected by either a divorce or death are left out of the church because they are embarrassed to be single. For these reasons, single parents do not wish to join a church. For instance, there may be a single mother

whose husband passed away from cancer, so she does not have a complete household, even though a single mother can establish a household with just herself and her children. In the discussions about family ministry at church, this single mother may be reminded about her husband and become jealous of families who have husbands. Thus, single-parent families leave the church, for the single mother's hurt for not having a husband is exacerbated, even though I explained that a mother can establish a household by herself. Similarly, single parents with a history of divorce worry that their children will be hurt when the church asks parents to participate in the church and its programs. So, there is potential for both the parents and children of single-parent families to be hurt.

Fourth, parents who are deacons want to leave the church because they do not want to spend time investing in their children's discipleship at home. They are working hard every day and want to rest instead. When the pastor started to change the system to a family ministry model, these parents felt pressure from the church. Thus, they want to leave the church. They know they need to lead their children in the ways of God, but they are tired and do not want to sacrifice their time.

What I Would Do Differently

I developed the subject matter of the project, methodologies, and schedules for family meetings at home. However, I decided to change the schedule and the approach for developing the parents' knowledge of family ministry.

First, parents in South Korea need to work, and some return home from work past eight o'clock. So, I decided to instruct them to practice their family worship on Saturdays for five minutes at lunch time. This time was more realistic for the families to participate in. Children do not go out of the house during lunch on Saturdays because they do not go to the academy. Generally, children in South Korea go to the academy Monday through Friday. They do not go to the academy on Saturday, so Saturday lunch is the best time to have family worship service.

Second, I realized the parents had limited knowledge of the Bible, so every week I sent them a message on a short story of the Bible related to establishing family worship. Parents require learning from stories in the Bible because they do not know how to conduct a family worship service even after listening to the lectures. Thus, I chose easy stories to send them.

Third, I provided easy Bible games, such as bingo with a specific phrase like “Genesis through Revelation.” When children hear stories of the Bible, they are bored and lose motivation. However, they are more pleased to engage with the lesson when there is something interesting incorporated into the lesson. Thus, children need to have a fun game to memorize a set phrase as they learn biblical truths.

Fourth, I provided parents with new songs, such as an English song. MyungSung Church has an English ministry for children, so they are very interested in English songs. If parents and children sing a song together, they will more easily cooperate and increase in their faith together.

Fifth, I checked with the parents about what time they could join the project’s lecture class. Busy parents would rather return home after the Sunday worship service. As a result, I conducted a survey to determine a good time for them to meet with one another.

Theological Reflection

The account of Adam and Eve in Genesis reflects how God created and composed the family. God created Adam and then created Eve to complement Adam and fulfill his desire for a companion. When God created Eve, he took out the rib of Adam. “Rib” carries the meaning of “side,” so Eve came alongside Adam to support him. But first, God had Adam go through all the animals in search of a companion. However, they were all found unsuitable to support him. Then, God presented Eve to Adam, and they became one flesh. Even the beginning of the Bible demonstrates how God initiated

family ministry. One participant in this project's class reflected, "We did not know about 'rib' having the meaning of 'side.' Also, we did not think about the composition of a family being found in the Bible. God thinks about his creation deeply because he thought about Adam's feeling of loneliness."

Also, many Bible scholars mention Ephesians 6:4 in relation to family ministry. Ephesians 6:4 proclaims, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." This verse mentions that God requires parents to disciple their children without provoking them. The Bible, including this verse, will help the MyungSung congregation to understand family ministry. Scripture is the primary instructor and motivator for helping parents understand their responsibility to disciple and lead their children unto God, even if those parents did not join the project.

Vern L. Bengtson says, "Those Millennials who grew up in a family that emphasized religious education seem to have a much more solid grasp of the history and theology of their faith."¹ In relation to knowing the history and theology of one's faith, some participants reflected, "I did not know how to teach about religious education," "I do not have a knowledge of history. However, I want to know about it to solve my doubt," and "I desire to learn about the history."

Bengtson states, "If the parents are not themselves involved in religious activities, if their actions are not consistent with what they preach, children are rarely motivated to follow in their parents' religious footsteps."² Regarding this, a participant described that "when I joined the program with our children, our children had motivation to join the program at church." Another said, "During the pajama talks, I slept with my children at church. My children do not forget it."

¹ Vern L. Bengtson, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48.

² Bengtson, *Families and Faith*, 72.

Holmen recounts, “The Southern Baptist Convention reports that they are currently losing 70 to 88 percent of the young people after their freshman year in college . . . and the young people may never come back.”³ The young adult group can evaluate what kinds of things are beneficial or not. Also, those in the young adult group have their own values, so they do not listen to their family’s opinion. Thus, they leave God. To try to avoid this from happening, parents need to faithfully teach the Bible to their children while they are still young. In addition, young adults observe that their parents do not follow and practice the Bible, even though the parents go to church. Thus, the young adults think that is hypocritical, and they leave the church. Participants reflected on Holmen’s quote about the statistics of young people leaving the church. Some said, “I think that MyungSung Church has the same circumstance. When children become a freshman [in college], they leave,” and “I have not seen the deacon’s son since he became a college student.”

Holmen states, “Many 18- to 29-year-olds believe Christianity is hypocritical because the version of Christianity they experienced was ‘done’ only at church and not at home.”⁴ Young adults are at a time in their lives when they can evaluate ideas and practices and can adopt their own values, so they analyze their family and church experience and choose to leave God. One participant reflected that “the congregation does not know [that some parents] gossip about the church, such as the pastors and congregation, at home. Thus, children have hostility and negative thoughts toward church. Therefore, I promise to not speak negatively about the church at home.”

Mark Holmen writes, “Even fewer families—1 out of every 20—have any type of worship experience together with their kids, other than while they are at church during

³ Mark Holmen, *Church + Home: The Proven Formula for Building Lifelong Faith* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2015), 28.

⁴ Holmen, *Church + Home*, 29.

a typical month.”⁵ Family ministry has a main point about parents needing to have family worship during the mealtimes at home because family worship can change their children’s minds to incline their faith toward God. Some participants reflected, “I am embarrassed to conduct family worship service. However, the pastor requires me to have family worship service, which can be a good influence on my children,” “I did not recognize family worship can make a family happier,” and “We did not used to have talks with each other. However, our children at mealtimes ask more about God.”

Timothy Paul Jones mentions, “In a family-based church calendar, you’re likely to find everything from a father-daughter banquet to a community outreach event where older and younger folk serve together; from a mother-son date night to a family mission trip or family camp, in addition to youth mission trips and youth camps.”⁶ A family mission trip would help relationships between parents and children. Parents and children can take the opportunity to speak about deep and meaningful subjects during the camp. Generally, families go on the trip for fun without a deeper purpose. However, when a family has a purpose for the mission trip, their children will be influenced positively by their parents about God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is also a vital passage pertaining to family ministry. These verses contain the Shema and the Great Commandment. These verses instruct people to love God and follow the Word of God, which includes the Ten Commandments. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 helps parents know how and why they should lead their children unto God.

J. Edward Hakes states,

When asked whether their churches had helped them to develop any plans for their children’s spiritual growth, nearly 60 percent of churched parents disagreed or

⁵ Holmen, *Church + Home*, 27.

⁶ Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 131.

strongly disagreed, while an additional 17 percent somewhat disagreed. Only 7 percent could state without any reservation that their churches had helped them to plan for spiritual growth in their children's lives.⁷

One participant reflected on this, saying, "We do not feel that MyungSung Church has a family ministry program. However, they made a seminar and provided us a good curriculum on how to teach our children about God."

Personal Reflection

MyungSung Church lacked knowledge about family ministry, and families relied heavily on the church for the development of their children's faith. Also, the church's age-segmented system, in which parents send their children to their own worship service without conducting family worship at home, has limitations. Before, I believed that family ministry meant friends leading their congregation's children in the things of God, which is partially true. However, these church teachers cannot influence the parents about the Word of God because the parents do not know basic Bible information. Also, friends do not have the responsibility to lead the children to the Lord when the children lose motivation. Thus, church teachers cannot be good primary influencers on the church's children. Right now, I understand that parents are good influencers and have the primary responsibility to influence their children unto God. Thus, I taught the parents who participated in the program at MyungSung Church and charged them with the responsibility to take on their household role to lead their children. Before I started the seminar, I posed what Jones calls a "sketch situation," asking, "What intentional practices of family devotions or discipleship have happened in your home in the past week?"⁸ Parents answered that they do not have devotions or disciple their children at home because they just bring their children to Sunday school, which can influence good faith. Jones speaks to this:

⁷ J. Edward Hakes, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 107.

⁸ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 24.

Many parents aren't discipling their children because they have never been disciplined. They've never learned how the gospel applies in their everyday lives, including their parenting practices. But there are also human means by which this distortion has developed over the past couple of centuries. One of these human means can be summarized in a single sentence: Churches have presented moms and dads with the impression that active participation in the discipleship of children is optional for parents.⁹

Parents who participated in the project now recognize they are their children's primary influencers and have the responsibility to lead their children at home. Haynes writes, "Parents are the primary faith influencers in their children's lives by design. To equip the generations effectively, we must reach and equip parents."¹⁰ Haynes continues, "In our church, these core competencies include Jesus, faith, the Bible, sin, repentance, salvation, and baptism. Strategically, while the parent reinforces these core competencies through Faith Talks, the church teaches the same competencies through Sunday school."¹¹ Children need to know the basics of the Word of God, such as faith, the Bible, sin, etc. Thus, during Sunday school, the pastor should focus on teaching the basics of the Word of God. Parents should also ask their children questions at home about what they learned at church to remind their children of these truths.

Haynes recounts what the pastor says before a baptism at his church, saying, "Baptism is a picture of a changed life in Jesus Christ. As these people are baptized this morning, they're publicly professing their new identity and faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin."¹² Children should know we have original sin, and when they sin, they need to ask for forgiveness from God.

I asked the parents in the class several questions during the project that I got from Haynes' book:

⁹ Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2011), 82, 83.

¹⁰ Brian Haynes, *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2009), 35

¹¹ Haynes, *Shift*, 60.

¹² Haynes, *Shift*, 62.

Using Deuteronomy 6:4-9 as the model for the ceremony, parents are asked four questions. “Will you choose this day to live with the commands of God on your own hearts?” “Do you accept responsibility as your child’s primary faith influencer to impress the truth and love of God on her as you live life together?” “Will you love this child with the unconditional love of Christ?” “Will you pray for her to know Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior?”¹³

Question One

The first question reads, “Will you choose this day to live with the commands of God on your own hearts?” The parents answered that they are busy working at their companies. However, they believe that even in their busyness the Holy Spirit works in them and remains with them to help when they have problems. I was surprised that they demonstrated such good faith and enthusiasm to pray to God and rely on him. Even though they are busy during the work week, they still have the commands of God in their heart.

Question Two

The second question reads, “Do you accept responsibility as your child’s primary faith influencer to impress the truth and love of God on her as you live life together?” After the parents attended the project’s seminar, they recognized that they are the primary influencers on their children. They were aware of an elder’s son and daughter who left the church when they became young adults and wanted to avoid the same situation with their children. Thus, the parents promised they will rehearse Sunday sermons with their children, follow directions from the pastor, and share their children’s circumstances with church leaders to increase their children’s faith. I was surprised the parents had enthusiasm to share the gospel with their children because they worry about their children leaving the Lord. The parents already saw the previous generation’s circumstance. Thus, this project positively influenced and provided parents with the motivation to disciple their children.

¹³ Haynes, *Shift*, 54.

Question Three

The third question reads, “Will you love this child with the unconditional love of Christ?” The parents answered emphatically, “Yes.” They love their children and desire for their children to believe in God and go to heaven with them. I hope the parents maintain this sentiment to take care of their children and lead them to God.

Question Four

The last question reads, “Will you pray for her to know Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior?” The parents answered that they will pray for their children every day. They specifically committed to praying for them before they go to bed. I believe that when the parents are following the Word of God in this manner, their children will not leave God.

Children’s concerns typically are the same as their parents’. So, when parents doubt God’s existence in their heart, their children are not likely to believe in God. Jones writes, “Joseph and Mary faithfully took Him to worship, and the book of Luke says He grew in wisdom. The household of Joseph was one that was intentionally led to observe faithfully the commandment that was given to Moses by God in Deuteronomy 6.”¹⁴ It is vitally important for parents to demonstrate their faith by practically following the Word of God. Such faithfulness and genuineness from parents will help their children change their minds to the truth.

Young people today generally do not have faith in God because he is invisible, and they do not have tangible experiences of God helping them. I would respond that people cannot see the air. However, if people do not have air, they cannot breathe. It is similar with the Holy Spirit’s existence. He is invisible, but without him one cannot spiritually live. If the Spirit lives and moves within parents, the children will be affected

¹⁴ Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 22.

by their parents' influence and discipleship. The Word of God, also, can give the children understanding and increase their faith.

Family ministry is a valid project and can help churches overcome difficulties in the church. After I finished the project, I received the following comments: "Thank you for teaching about family ministry," "I am happy to be motivated to disciple my children," "I am worried about how to lead my children. However, the family ministry approach will change my children's faith," "Thank you for what I have learned," and "My life is changed knowing that children will try to follow the Word of God as my wife and I walk in obedience and commit to family ministry. Thus, I am happy to start family ministry at home and follow all the curriculum."

Conclusion

Churches and seminaries in South Korea know they need to have a system to lead the next generation because it is too common for children to leave the church and ignore the pastor when they become a young adult. Thus, churches and seminaries recognize they need to adopt family ministry and instruct their parents to influence their children toward God. Twenty years ago, it was more common for parents to have family worship at home. However, the following generation thought it was not necessary, so they removed family worship at home and instead relied on the church to teach and influence their children. However, relying solely on the church cannot adequately change children's faith, and it results in the children leaving God.

The family ministry approach positively influences current family relationships and cultures, as well as those of future families. Family ministry motivates parents, then parents influence their children to develop their faith. Once these children become parents, they also will influence their children in the faith. Christians need to invest their faith into their family.

Finally, cooperation among the whole church is necessary for a successful family ministry. Pastors and the congregation have different roles to help parents establish and maintain family ministry at home. Cooperation between the church and the home will ensure families and children benefit from biblical discipleship both at church and in the home.

APPENDIX 1

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PECEPTION SURVEY AND
FAMILY PRACTICES SURVEY

Table A1. Part 1: Parental perceptions

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
01. I prioritize consistent family devotional or worship times in my family's schedule.						
02. 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.						
03. The church is where children ought to receive most of their Bible teaching.						
04. 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.						

Table A1 continued

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
05. 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.						
06. Parents, and particularly fathers, have a responsibility to engage personally in a discipleship process with each of their children.						
07. Church leaders are the people primarily responsible for discipling my children and teaching them to share the gospel with others. [REVERSE SCORED]						
08. My church has helped me to develop a clear plan for my child's spiritual growth.						

Table A2. Part 2: Parental practices

	Never	Once	A couple of times	Three or four times	Five or six times	Seven or more times
09. Other than mealtimes, how many times in the past <i>week</i> have I prayed aloud with any of my children?						
10. How many times in the past <i>week</i> has my family eaten a meal together with television, music, and other similar media turned off?						
11. How many times in the past <i>month</i> have I read or discussed the Bible with any of my children?						
12. How many times in the past <i>month</i> 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 <i>two months</i> has my family engaged in any family devotional or worship time in our home?						
14. How many times in the past <i>two months</i> have I talked with my spouse or with a close friend about my children's spiritual development?						
15. How many times in the past <i>year</i> 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 <i>year</i> has any church leader made any contact with me to help me to engage actively in my child's spiritual development?						

APPENDIX 2
CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Name of evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Biblical Counseling Curriculum Evaluation					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Faithfulness					
The content of the curriculum is hermeneutically sound. All Scripture is properly interpreted, explained, and applied.				12	
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound.				12	
Scope					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.			1	11	
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of biblical counseling.				12	
Methodology					
The curriculum sufficiently addresses counseling methodology.			1	11	
The curriculum makes use of various learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, case studies, role play, and homework.				12	
Practicality					
The curriculum includes opportunities to practice counseling applications.			1	11	
At the end of the course, participants will be able to counsel others biblically.			1	11	

Please include any additional comments regarding the curriculum below:

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING THE CHURCH TO DISCIPLE THEIR CHILDREN AT MYUNGSUNG CHURCH, SOUTH KOREA

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Chapter 1 helps the reader understand what MyungSung Church is doing and how to approach this project to disciple their children. Chapters 2 and 3 explain different roles within family ministry based on the Bible and other literature. Chapters 4 and 5 detail the family ministry seminar and its pre- and post-test results. Thus, this project can help pastors and families cooperate to develop children's faith.

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