

Series - Father's Day Message

Date/s - 16 June 2019

Topic - Why Dads Are Irreplaceable

Speaker/s - Snr Pastor Ben Lee

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like "Be Enthroned", "Great Are You Lord", "Jesus At The Center" or "Our Father".

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Recognise that it is crucial for fathers to be actively involved in parenting
2. Undertake the responsibility to be the primary disciple makers of their children
3. Commit to being spiritual parents to fatherless children/grandchildren in RiverLife.

Word [45 min]

In this sermon, Senior Pastor Ben examined both Scripture and scientific research. He maintained that whatever the Word says, it will be true in nature and in scientific research and findings.

Fathers are crucial and irreplaceable. Children, at a very young age, have a deep need to know their fathers. When that connection is missing due to emotional or physical distance, they spend much of their lives looking for acceptance and affirmations elsewhere. It also creates emotional gaps that are difficult to define and will come out differently in each child.

The roles of fathers have changed. Now, fathers co-parent. Kyle Pruett, from Yale Medical School, wrote that "fathers bring different assets to parenting than mothers".

1) Masculine Parental Input

It is written in Genesis 1:27 that, "God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them". God created the male and the female in His image. He created male and female differences to reflect the Trinitarian oneness of God. Thus, the image of God is seen in the marriage between male and female (two singles becoming one), and the child experiences the agape love of God through the father and the mother. The child benefits from both the masculine traits of the father and the feminine traits of the mother. Children are prewired to connect with both parents and they get holistic parenting from fathers and mothers.

Here, Senior Pastor Ben also addressed the singles. Singles are also whole; singles don't have to be married to be whole. They reflect God's glory in a different way from those who are married.

Fathers provide a look into the world of men. There was a study in 2001 that suggests that the influence of a father's love on children is as great as the mother's love, and occasionally, greater. Girls with involved fathers are more likely to have healthier relationships with the opposite sex. They learn what is appropriate

behaviour with a male from being with the first significant male in their lives – their fathers. Fathers affirmed their femininities as well. Fathers also help initiate boys into manhood. Without fathers, boys struggle to know how to be a man, a husband and a father. Fathers also help sons understand male sexuality and affirm their masculinity. That is something that mothers are not able to bestow on their sons.

2) Dads Call Forth Identity

Mothers primarily nurture, and fathers validate.

The first father (Adam) had a special calling to name and affirm identity. He named his wife (Genesis 3:20), his children and all living creatures (Genesis 2:19-20). Christ was also affirmed by His Father (Matthew 3:17). Jesus got this life-giving blessing and impartation that helped sustain Him through the wilderness and all the way to the Cross. It is natural for a child to want to find his/her identity from his/her source of origin (parents). God gives each child an identity, and it is the father who helps locate the identity and affirms it. It is also the father's responsibility to protect his child from mistaken identity.

Our Heavenly Father has given us our life assignment/calling. It is determined by our spiritual gifts and natural talents. Fathers are to help their children discover, develop and deploy their spiritual gifts to fulfil their calling. Pray over the future of your children. The enemy wants to steal your children's destinies and sabotage the trajectory of your children's lives. Therefore, speak words of life, courage and identity over your children.

3) Discipleship

Fathers and mothers are the primary disciple makers of their children.

Fathers and mothers are to take the Word of God and "teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 11:19), "so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life" (Deuteronomy 6:2).

Fathering includes discipleship (Ephesians 6:4). A mother tends to be gentle (1 Thessalonians 2:7) and a father provides leadership (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Both parents disciple, but differently. Together there is balance and your children can see two sides of love.

A father has tremendous influence over his children. Your children will love who you love. Your grandchildren will love who you love. A father also has the responsibility to walk his family through difficult times. Fatherhood is integral to the health of the family and the society. Fathers steer the families to serve the Lord and walk in His path (Joshua 24:15).

Summary

Moms and dads are not interchangeable. They bring different assets to parenting. Mothers cannot father. Fathers cannot mother. Each brings different strengths to parenthood. Fathers should be engaged in the family and not delegate the job of parenting and discipleship to their wives.

There are some households in the church with no fathers or fathers that are present but emotionally distant. The church will need to fill in the gaps, with the more mature among us stepping up to be spiritual parents to the fatherless in RiverLife. Scripture tells us that God defends the cause of the fatherless. Only the living God can fully fill the gaping hole left by fatherlessness (Psalm 27:10).

Discussion Questions

1. **When you were growing up, what was one helpful advice that your father gave you?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: This is a recap question for members to examine, positively, the role their fathers have played in shaping who they are today. Members who are fatherless can think of someone they regard as a father (i.e. a father figure like an uncle, a brother, a pastor). Fathers provide masculine parental inputs that are as important as the mothers' feminine input. Both inputs are crucial and beneficial to children. Thus, it is important for members to note how their fathers' masculine parental input helped them in their lives.

2. **There are multiple voices in society calling a young person to try this, do that or become this. How can a father protect his child from mistaken identity? How does a father help us discover our identity and become who we are called to be?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: A reflect and relate question for members to think about practical ways that fathers can protect and affirm their child's God-given identity. Leaders to also encourage members to constantly pray for God's guidance to accurately pinpoint their children's talents, spiritual gifts and calling.

Some ways that fathers can affirm your child's identity:

- Be intentional about showing verbal, emotional and physical affirmation to your children.
- Give your sons opportunities to discover their masculine selves through challenges and reasonable risks. Cheer them on when they try. Push them when they feel like giving up. Encourage them when they fail.
- Avoid the temptation to live vicariously through your children.

Parents, give your children space to develop their own interests and gifts, then become their greatest supporter of who God has created them to be.

(extracted from

https://www.family.org.sg/wholelife/contents/Articles/RelationshipsV2/Affirm_Your_Child_s_God-Given_Design.aspx)

3. Senior Pastor Ben mentioned, "Your kids and grandkids will love what you love. Love Jesus with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Put Jesus first, always." How can we change our mindset and commit to invest emotionally and spiritually in RiverLife's children and grandchildren (those not of our biological family)? [15 min]

Leader's Notes: This is a response question to encourage members to find practical ways to be spiritual parents of fatherless children and grandchildren. It also requires a mindset change in order to be a parent outside of the home and to instill that sense of responsibility.

Paul is a good example of a spiritual father. You may reference him.

You may also refer to this article on being a spiritual parent: <https://thedisciplemaker.org/being-a-spiritual-parent/>

These are suggested pointers for the leaders to have members commit to on being a "spiritual parent":

- Good follow-up will cost you something in time and prayer – it is hard work which requires you to give your life to someone

- Remember each child is uniquely made by God and that disciples are not mass-produced
- New believers need help and stimulation from many other Christians, especially mature ones – it takes a disciple to make a disciple
- The real test of Christlikeness comes in the stresses and strains of everyday life – we need to point God’s children to Christ and the Scripture.

Works [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. Every father in RiverLife to be an involved parent and a primary disciple-maker of their children.
2. Every RiverLifer to rise up to be ‘Spiritual parent’. We will have that desire to disciple the next generation in RiverLife.

Announcement

1. **Forum on Sexuality**

Sun, 23 Jun | 2-4.30pm | Victory Chapel
Register online via bit.ly/rlc-23jun-forum
Walk-in is allowed.

Church Vision:

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.

Mission:

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.