

Discussing Faith at Home

How do you discuss matters of faith in your home? Is it in a formal setting where things have been neatly arranged? Or is it like in our home, where the discussion of faith happens, most often, as part of everyday life? However it happens, whether formal or informal, discussing faith is important; it becomes the foundation of home life. The believing home is and should be a safe and secure place for a child to grow and become an adult. The home is where children are first taught about God and His Word.

Begin with the Little Ones

When should we begin to discuss God's Word with a child? Solomon, with wisdom given by God, wrote: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). What does this really mean? Have I done this as a parent? How capable does a parent feel when they read the clear instruction of God's Word? "And thou shalt teach them (God's commands) diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:7). This clearly gives answers to these questions and from generation to generation the weak teaching of the parent bears fruit.

Have you remembered the teaching you received as a child? Of course, there were the opportunities that mother and father used as situations arose. Recently, in the busyness of everyday life, one of our grandsons asked his mother, "Mom, what shoulder does the devil sit on?" "Hmm, I would say he sits on the left," his mom replied. "Who sits on the right shoulder?" "Jesus." "So what does the devil do up there?" "He whispers in your ear to do bad things, like steal, lie, and break things, not to listen to mom and dad, stuff like that." "How do you get him off there?" "By having your sins forgiven. Once you have them forgiven, he leaves you alone. He will come back, but if you have your sins forgiven, he keeps getting kicked off your shoulder." "Oh good! I want to have my sins forgiven! I don't want to listen to the devil. I want to make it to heaven 'cuz heaven is the best! You go to heaven when your sins are forgiven!"

Children simply accept the teaching of mom and dad from a very young age. Surely these times are not planned. They are the moments that life happens. The child was satisfied with mom's simple instruction. It's important that a parent is available when these kinds of questions come up; simple answers are that which lay the foundation for years to come.

Allow Time for Discussions

As the child grows and the sowing of God's Word continues, the importance of discussing matters of faith in the home also increases. A young child is often willing to share his or her experiences with anyone who will listen. This changes as the child grows into adolescence. Replaced are feelings of insecurity and doubt. Questions that are important to ask, yet not knowing how, the child may keep to himself. These years can prove to be challenging. How I can reach my child? a parent wonders.

Here, I have no answer. During these times I have often thought to pray to God, that He would give opportunity to discuss matters. It is He who knows more perfectly than I what is needed. Recently, a daughter came home from "haps" and had some questions that she and her friends had been discussing that evening. It was already late and the time went quickly gathered at the kitchen table visiting around pressing questions that she had. Too often with teenagers this is their time, late in the evening. I went to bed that night thankful for the opportunity that God had given.

There may be more formal settings in your home where discussing faith has become tradition. Some have

established a weekly “family night” where the calendar has been cleared of other distractions. Perhaps phones and electronic media have been shut off, and the family takes opportunity to share in each other’s lives. Yet others have found ways to develop traditions, perhaps at holiday time, baptisms, or home services, where visiting and discussing around God’s Word takes place. No matter which form your family takes, the most important thing is that faith and God’s Word is discussed in the home.

We should also remember those homes that are made up of single adults. How does visiting over faith matters happen there? Is it possible that over time faith matters can slip in importance next to everyday life? It is good to remember these single ones—invite them over, and open your home to them. They need the same love and support that believers in family settings need.

God’s Word Instructs, Encourages

May God give to us situations where it is possible to gather and discuss all matters of life and faith. In the world around us, there are many things that can draw us away from God’s kingdom, not only the worldly temptations, but also those matters that attach so easily to our carnal reason. The believer finds comfort in the age-old teachings of God’s Word; this Word gives direction to the tired parent who often faces questions about how we should raise our children, and what we should teach them. The Psalmist with encouraging words writes, “We will not hide them (God’s Words) from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Ps. 78:4,7). Jeremiah also encourages, “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16).

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Questions to Discuss:

- How have discussions of faith happened in your home?
- Do you remember times when discussions about faith seemed even more important than others?
- Discuss opportunities where new family traditions might be made.
- Discuss the importance of parents asking to hear the gospel in the home. How does this speak to children?

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