

The Role of Mother

In His perfect plan, God gave men and women different but complimentary roles. To the woman He gave the role to carry and give birth to children. The mother carries this miracle of new life inside of her body for nine months before the child is even born. The mother's care is vital to the health and well-being of the new baby and the growing child. Mothers play a central role in rearing honest, contributing members of society's next generation, yet motherhood is not always given the value it deserves.

Examples in Scripture

Believing mothers have a special God-given role. Remember from the pages of Scripture that it is written of Paul's young co-worker, Timothy, that he learned about living faith from his mother Lois and his grandmother Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). Scriptures paint the picture of a believing mother as one of teacher and comforter (Isa. 66:13), caretaker of her home (Prov. 31:27), and one who trusts in God's plan for her life (Luke 1:38). A believing mother, alongside her husband, endeavors to build a home where there is love and forgiveness; a home that is a refuge from the temptations of the world; a home where God's Word is taught and valued.

The Most Important Duty

The first and most important role of a believing mother is to preach the gospel to her children. In the same way that the Bible gives a picture of Sarah, the congregation Mother, who cares for its members, a natural mother also cares for the children in the small home congregation, where the building blocks of faith and forgiveness are taught and the love of the Lord Jesus is felt. It is good that a mother preaches the gospel and says prayers with her children already from infancy. God's Word teaches us that He has known each child He gives before his bones are even framed (Jer. 1:5) and that He knows the book of each child's life before it is even opened (Ps. 139:16). By preaching the gospel, a believing mother, together with her believing husband, tends the tiny seedlings that God has placed in their home and in their care. As the child grows, the mother and father nurture, instruct, comfort, and admonish. They, with many weaknesses, plant the seeds of faith in prayer. It is God who then gives the increase.

Another important role of a believing mother and father is to bring their children to the feet of Jesus, to the hearing of God's Word. Children learn from their parents' example how important it is to be at services and the gatherings of God's children. They also see how God's children are served in their home, how the family pauses around God's Word at home festivities, and how the family sings songs of Zion together.

Mothers Teach By Example

The saying goes: "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." It's funny, but true. Mothers can set the tone for the atmosphere in the home. Is the home negative and critical or loving and forgiving? Mothers teach by their attitude, whether it is positive or negative. They teach by how they speak to their children and husband and by how they treat others. Mothers also teach by how they speak about others, whether they put the best construction on all that their neighbor does or if they gossip about the difficulties of others.

Mothers teach the role of work in life by having children participate in household chores. The workload is lighter when all members of the family participate. Mothers also have an important role in teaching their children values like responsibility, respect, honesty, and diligence. Along with tending to all the practical duties of caring for the home, it is important that a mother also spend time with her children: reading, singing, etc., and fostering open communication by taking the time to really listen to and talk to her children.

Spouses Support; The Gospel Encourages

Scripture teaches wives to "submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). When both spouses in marriage live with a mind of service and sacrifice toward one another—submitting to one another and treating each other with kindness, patience, humbleness, respect, and forgiveness—they also teach their children how to treat their future spouses and how to care for difficulties in marriage and to forgive from the heart. When a mother and father work together for the good of the home, the practical workload is shared, and each supports the other in his or her role.

In everything they do, mothers teach. Yet, believing mothers do not feel like good examples to their children. Tiredness sets in. Quarrels arise. Impatient words are said. Selfishness comes to the surface. Believing mothers have the freedom, as often as they feel the need, to ask for forgiveness. Offenses that have broken love and unity in the family can be cared for. When there is an atmosphere of forgiveness in the home, when both father and mother and the children are ready to ask for and preach the gospel, a spirit of unity and love can be preserved in the family, and mothers receive new strength to resume the God-given task that is before them.

Service and Sacrifice

When I think of mothers of previous generations, the words service and sacrifice come to my mind. These mothers spent their lives tending their homes, caring for their families, and serving God's children in their homes and around their dinner

tables although they had very little extra and few modern conveniences. They served others first. Today's society often emphasizes that we must have our own needs met first. Their example is one of service to others, as Jesus taught us.

Simple Faith Is Enough

The simple faith and trust of these older mothers is also a good example for us today. When my mother passed away many years ago, one thing spoke strongly to me. She had very little in earthly possessions. She taught with the simple gifts God had given her. She had faults. Yet simply by faith, by believing her sins forgiven, she reached the eternal shores of heaven. Simple faith was enough!

In this time of selfishness and hurry, a believing mother can feel tempted, tried, overwhelmed, and doubting. From where can she find strength to battle the questions of her own mind, her own failings and sinfulness, as well as the pressures of society and the trials and sorrows of life? The psalmist writes, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord" (Ps. 121:1,2). God promises to be with us and help us. He cares for us in all the difficulties of life when we trust in Him. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

May we say with the writer to the Hebrews: "I will put my trust in Him... behold, I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2:13).

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Questions for discussion:

- What memories do you have of your mother? What did she teach you?
- What are the struggles, challenges, and temptations of mothers in today's society?
- How can a mother who is tired and overwhelmed find help? How can we help her?
- What is the role of a believing mother in today's society? Times have changed, society has changed, but has the role of a believing mother changed?
- God's Word pictures the kingdom of God as the mother of the children of God. Read Matthew 12:46–50 and Galatians 4:26. In what ways is God's kingdom like a mother?

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