
Getting Children Back Into the Main Church Service

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Exhortation for Family-Integrated Churches, and a Call to Eliminate Secular Methods in Our Churches



by [Sean Gill](#)

Being an opinionated first-born son, and yet a child of the Most High God, I often get caught off-guard, and must repent and adjust my attitude. A few years ago, my attitude changed radically while attending a home-school conference. During the conference, I had an unexpected encounter with Dr. Voddie Baucham of Houston, Texas, who, in one of his highly enlightening, entertaining, sometimes vernacular, culturally radical and convicting messages, charged every man to take the proverbial bull by the horns, “man up, Sally!” and **teach your wife and children Scripture at home**. I was pretty convicted after hearing him speak, and actually said “ouch” instead of “Amen” throughout his time on the stage. I was convicted because, at the time of that message, I had not been teaching my children or my wife diligently or purposefully, but only as a matter of my own whim. I repented and am growing in this area day by day, not perfect yet, but growing nonetheless.

The Biblical Ideal

You may be thinking to yourself, what do home-schooling, family worship and family discipleship have to do with getting children back into the church service? Think about it. If men would disciple their wives and children diligently at home daily, if women would teach the Scriptures and godly character lessons to their children at home throughout the day, then there would be no need for Sunday school at all. Men would be digging into the Word for their families, learning and growing, sanctifying both them and their families in the Word. The private home worship would flow naturally into the public Sunday gathering on the Lord’s day. Going to church should be a help for this way of life, not a hindrance. Going to church on Sunday should be a continuation of this culture of learning, the way God has ordained it to be: Christians submitting to teaching of the Word of God by the authorities *as He has ordained*, and not by some untrained layman. As the Scriptures say, some plant, some water, but God gives the increase.

And, it would be very biblical. “What? Are you saying children’s church programs are un-biblical?” Read on my friend.

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What Is and What Should Be

Picture the average American family going to the “split-the-family” church on Sunday. Mom goes to the women’s class; Dad goes to the men’s. Suzy goes to the middle-school class, and Billy goes to the teen youth group class; then, mid-week, the youth group/Awana, etc. Some churches actually have Sunday school classes or “church” for children *during* the worship service. Leaders of these Sunday school classes usually don’t fall under the biblical roles taught in Scripture. Children are no longer under the headship of their parents. Women are not under the headship of their husbands. The children get the message **loud and clear**: “Mom and Dad, we here at the American church know the Bible better than you, so don’t try this at home.” Sadly, this is a true statement in today’s modern American church because they don’t teach our men how to disciple their children and wives any more.

In His Word, God has purposed certain people to hold the “teacher” role for spiritual matters (fathers, mothers, and Elders), and has given us biblical patterns of children in the main worship service. Systematically segregating children from the body is not taught by the Scriptures, in fact, doing so goes against the pattern seen in Scripture, and actually mimics the world. In church, we ought to exhort men to diligently train up their families as Dr. Baucham did with me that day, and not send our sons and daughters to Sunday school to be taught by a well-meaning volunteer who may not even have children. Child training is ultimately the responsibility of the father.

I think we all know this intuitively. I was handing out church flyers in a nice neighborhood one day, and approached a young man, probably 10 years old. I started to give him a flyer. The next think I know Dad comes out yelling, “Hey, what are you doing?” I quickly withdrew the flyer and gained a valuable lesson. It was as if Dad were saying, “How *dare* you approach my child with literature! That is *my* son!” Yet, millions of Christians send their children off to school and even to Sunday school without giving it a second thought.

For Your Reading Enjoyment

I’m not the authority by any means on this subject. There are great men who go before me. Voddie’s message, along with learning about the National Center for Family Integrated Churches (NCFIC.ORG), led me to read “A Church in the House” by Matthew Henry. It teaches that the home is a “little church,” whereby the man is the priest of his wife and children. After reading the Scripture texts quoted by these men, I now have a firm conviction that it is necessary to have a “little church” in my house and for it also to be practiced in every walk of life. However, this “little church” does not replace the main gathering, but is beneficial to the family, whom God has set up – not usurping the local church gathering, but a compliment to it.

Scott Brown, the Director of the NCFIC, has written a book called “A Weed in the Church, How a culture of age segregation is harming the next generation, fragmenting the family, and dividing the church.” Quoting from the web site,

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“*A Weed in the Church* suggests that this well-recognized crisis has a specific cause, which will surprise many. Brown argues that while Scripture defines and wholeheartedly encourages youth discipleship, the premises of modern youth ministry are at odds with biblical teaching and must be reformed. *A Weed in the Church* unfolds the history, the nature, the effect, and the root problem of systematic, age-segregated youth ministry and presents helpful solutions built on Scripture's sure foundation.”

In a day and age where many people believe there is no God, and where some studies show that 80% of our “churched” children are going to college never to return, I am growing more cautious of the way our family is doing things, careful to not mimic the world as the Lord has told us in His Word. Systematically segregating children (VBS, children’s church, Awana, Sunday school, etc.) in our churches is not biblical. The Bible says to not let many be teachers; yet it seems biblical qualifications for Sunday school teachers are not considered at all in some churches.

A book, “How God Wants Us to Worship Him,” by Dr. Joe Morecraft, III, about the regulative principle of worship, the author says that God is concerned with *how* He is to be worshipped, not adding anything He didn’t explicitly command (i.e., “strange fire”), and not taking away anything He has commanded in Scripture. An intriguing question the regulative principle asks: **“If you were on a desert island, and the Only Book you had were the Bible, how would you live your life and how would you worship Him?”** It can be purchased here: <http://www.visionforum.com/browse/product/how-god-wants-us-to-worship-him/>

Church History

I have also been researching church history and world history to see where we got the idea of age-segregated child education. Below are some facts I have researched that may be of interest.

It was not until the early 1800’s when family-segregated “Sunday school” came into the picture. Until then, church services were family-integrated. Sunday school came about in England by a man, Robert Raikes, who most likely sincerely cared about poor children of chimney sweeps who didn’t know how to read or write. His motive was to get them out of poverty, and to teach them the Bible. These schools were not age-segregated and were geared for unbelievers. It was a para-church movement, not a church movement.

Sunday schools increased in frequency in the early 19th century until today. It is inaccurate to say that this movement was motivated by Darwinian principles as some wrongly state. However, age segregation in our schools and Sunday schools actually mimicked what pagan Greek philosophers taught: children should not be taught by their parents, but by state educators. Sadly, biblical patriarchs eventually withered away, bringing in women to run the local programs while men went off to work. Go to a modern church today and you will find that many programs are run by women (nursery, church admin, Sunday school, etc.); some have women ministers, priests, pastors, and deaconesses. Reference: *The History of the Sunday School Movement*, Doug Phillips, audio CD.

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<http://www.visionforum.com/browse/product/?productid=58779&cid=320>

There is much documentation about the origins of our American education system. Basically, it has deep roots in pagan culture and philosophy. Charles Darwin ushered in his new theory of evolution, and his contemporaries in philosophy, education, and psychology came up with some pretty wild theories. One man, Ernst Haeckel, had a theory that unborn babies in the womb underwent evolutionary metamorphic changes. He went so far as to falsify drawings of embryos in these states of “evolution,” saying they looked like fish, dogs, pigs, chickens, etc. Other educators took this theory and applied it to the schools, segregating ages (kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, etc.) so that children’s “evolutionary stages” could be more rapidly developed as to create the “whole man, properly nurtured by the state.” **Sadly, the church adapted it.** As you can clearly see in US history, gone were the one-room school-houses, and in came the large educational institutions we know today. http://www.thewordsofeternallife.com/sunday_school.html , <http://ministry-to-children.com/history-of-sunday-school>. Here’s an interesting quote I found on the Internet:

“There are some minor roots outside his work, but in 1904 when psychologist G. Stanley Hall (an evolutionist and contemporary of Darwin) published a book called, “Adolescence: Us Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education,” he advocated a new theory of childhood development **based on evolutionary recapitulation**, meaning that the stages in a child’s development mirror biological evolution and the ancestry of man. **This theory almost immediately was accepted and applied to classrooms across America.** He also invented the term "adolescence", referencing a stage in a child's development mirroring the “stormy early civilization” stage, an age where he felt children were pre-programmed to rebel against authority, and finally then to grow into full civilization. **Hall's theories formed the basis for age-segregated education, a model still in effect today in schools both government and Christian, and also in most churches.**

Hall believed that it would be a mistake to intermingle the age groups, as doing so would depart from the "**evolutionary model**". His model would more closely parallel evolution, keeping the age groups together as one unit. Remember, there is no foundational principle of "the family" in evolution. Families are merely for producing offspring. The evolutionary model is one of supposed "ages and stages" which do not intermingle (Australopithecus did not learn what he had to learn by living with Neanderthal or homo sapiens.” <http://www.puritanboard.com/f24/age-segregated-sunday-school-unbiblical-36534> , (emphasis mine).

Here is some more information on G. Stanley Hall if you would like to peruse it: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._Stanley_Hall

We in the church mimic not only age-segregation, but also adopt other worldly philosophies. The so-called “Modern Father of Experiential Education” John Dewey, studied under men like G. Stanley Hall. From a Biblical Christian perspective, here’s a scary quote about Dewey: “Dewey continually argues that education and learning are social and interactive processes, and thus the school itself is a social institution through which social reform can and should take place...” Dewey goes on to acknowledge that education and schooling are instrumental in creating social

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change and reform. Yikes! This idea is pervasive in liberal scholarly circles today. The idea is that if you control the minds of young people, they will grow up adapting your philosophies and societal ideas, thus creating a more utopian ideal.

And look at this one: “Dewey also had specific notions regarding how education should take place within the classroom. In “The Child and the Curriculum” (1902), Dewey discusses two major conflicting schools of thought regarding educational pedagogy. The first is centered on the curriculum and focuses almost solely on the subject matter to be taught. Dewey argues that the major flaw in this methodology is the inactivity of the student; within this particular framework, ‘the child is simply the immature being who is to be matured; he is the superficial being who is to be deepened’ (1902, p. 13).[21] He argues that in order for education to be most effective, content must be presented in a way that allows the student to relate the information to prior experiences, thus deepening the connection with this new knowledge.” This contradicts Scripture. The Bible says that we are to bring up a child in the way he should go so that he will not depart from it. We are to meditate on the Bible day and night. We are to teach our children when we sit in our houses, walk by the way, when you lay down, and when we rise up (Deuteronomy 6:7). The educational system should not and is not responsible for my children; the man of the home is, according to the Bible.

Society deems it necessary to segregate children and separate them from their parents in order to “properly” teach them. This goes against biblical headship, the role of parents, and we don’t see this in the Bible. Jean Jacques Rousseau believed children should not be educated by ones parents or relatives. His claim to fame is that he dropped off his 5 children at the orphanage right after they were born. Can you imagine? <http://generationswithvision.com/Articles/10>

Here are some more references if you wish to read more on these misguided people:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dewey#On_education , <http://www.christianparents.com/jdewey.htm> .

Thus Says the Lord

We should be teaching children that there is a Father in heaven and cares for them (relational) and wisdom is given from God’s revelation, not experience. The Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick, who can understand it?”; “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;” and “there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” We should be teaching them to put off their childish ways and become fully mature. In my own personal application of Bible teaching with my son and daughter, it is simply amazing what they can grasp at young ages. If you talk to a child in baby-talk, they will never mature. If you use words which are above their grasp, they will usually ask what the words actually mean, expanding their vocabulary (my 2-year-old asked my wife what “Holy” meant yesterday!).

When we use the same methods as the world, is it pleasing to God? God has told us to not learn the way of the nations. “Hear the word that the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: “Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the

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heavens because the nations are dismayed at them, for the customs of the peoples are vanity” (Jer. 10:1-3, ESV). To quote John Gill, the late 18th century theologian:

“Not education-principles. It is right in parents to do as Abraham did, to teach their children to keep the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19). The direction of the wise man is an exceeding good one; Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6); that is, easily and ordinarily: and it becomes Christians under the gospel dispensation to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4); and a great mercy and blessing it is to have a religious education; but then, as wrong principles may be infused as well as right ones, into persons in their tender years, it becomes them, when come to years of maturity and discretion, to examine them, whether they are according to the word of God, and so judge for themselves, whether they are to be abode by or rejected. I know it is a grievous thing with some persons to forsake the religion they have been brought up in; but upon this foot, a man that is born and brought up a Turk or a Jew, a Pagan or a Papist, must ever continue so. Sad would have been the case of the apostle Paul, if he had continued in the principles of his education; and what a shocking figure did he make whilst he abode by them? thinking, according to them, he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus (Acts 22:3, 4; 26:9).

Nor are the customs of men a rule of judgment, or a direction which way men should take in matters of religion; for the customs of the people are for the most part vain (Jer. 20:3), and such as are not lawful for us, being Christians, to receive or observe (Acts 16:21); and concerning which we should say, We have no such custom, neither the churches of God (1 Cor. 11:16).”

<http://www2.standardbearer.org/FileDownload.aspx?Type=DocumentLibrary&ID=4>

We should also not be taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit: “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” Col. 2:8. The schools and American education are rooted, founded, and immersed in human tradition and empty deceit. What model in churches is being implemented for the discipleship of the children? I am afraid we are ignorantly teaching them the world’s model!

When a child walks into the halls of a church, he or she should not be seeing the same culture, but a different culture than what he is seeing in the world. When a child sees other fathers and mothers in charge of the Sunday school class or the youth group or the children’s church, what is he learning? I believe he is learning that his father/mother is not qualified to teach spiritual matters. I think he is learning that Mom and Dad don’t know enough to be teaching them. When a child’s time is consumed in a world where Mom and Dad are simply physical providers (meals, a house, toys, television, etc.), it is no wonder that most youths simply leave the faith as soon as they are capable of providing these things for themselves.

Sunday schools, children’s church, and youth groups are inventions only found in the last 200 years of Christendom. For all but the elite, early life in the American colonies up until the 1800’s, families were responsible for teaching children. A law written in 1642 told parents that they were responsible for teaching their children law and Religion at the risk of their children being taken away from them:

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<http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/schoollaw1642.html> . This illustrates thinking in early America. Again, they believed that families were responsible for teaching children.

What does the Bible say? Using hermeneutics, it is acceptable to examine culture in the Bible and also history to see if certain patterns exist from which we can learn. Even when we cannot find an explicit command which states children should be in every worship service, neither can we find a command which states they should be pulled out of the service. However, in the context, the Apostle Paul expected to find children in the gatherings when he wrote to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. Any good student of scripture always includes this question as part of his hermeneutic: to whom is the author writing this particular passage of Scripture? We can't conclude that the Apostle Paul is building an argument for age-integrated worship services. But we can safely conclude from these Scriptures is that he expected them to be there when his letter was read, or else it would say something like, "Husbands and Wives, tell your children to obey..." But he did not. Instead, he told Husbands and Wives how to act, teaching them submission and love, which was directly followed by exhortation **directly to the children**. But does that Scripture alone constitute eliminating children's church and age-segregated youth programs? We should look at the other patterns of Scripture as well. Why are we using the world's model for teaching our youth? And, if this concerns us, where can we find biblical patterns of teaching children and worshipping our LORD, following the pattern of the sound words in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 1:13?

What does Scripture say about children? Below is a matrix of what Scripture I could find regarding this, with the context in mind, and if this is a command or teaching from God and its application. I actually could not find a command like this: "Though shall keep Thy children in the church service!" However, there is a pattern of children actually being present in the congregation of the elect.

By the way, I think it is acceptable for us to look for patterns in Scripture, but it can be dangerous to assume certain philosophies are always good using such methods. For instance, I would never say that polygamy is acceptable based on the fact that it is seen as a pattern. However, it is well-understood that polygamy was also not the original plan of God, and we see later Scripture condemning it. This is not the case with the Biblical patterns of how to treat children in the church. In the case of age-integrating our youth, how is this dangerous or bad teaching? How does it go against Scripture? If you look at the patterns, you see a clear teaching: that Mom and Dad are responsible for teaching their children, and that there was not one mention of youth groups in the context of the Church.

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Bible Reference	Context	Command or Teaching? and Application
<p>Psalm 78:1-4</p> <p>1 Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.</p> <p>2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:</p> <p>3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.</p> <p>4 We will not hide them 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.</p>	<p>Doctrinal or instructive Psalm as the Hebrew word "Maschil" signifies (John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible.)</p>	<p>Command to the Jewish fathers, and later to the spiritual offspring of Christ. Applied, that is simply means that we are to teach our children. No method is given; however, in Deut. it is stated that we are to teach our children diligently at various points during the waking hours. It is clear from this passage the responsibility falls directly on the fathers.</p>
<p>Deut. 31:12-13</p> <p>12 Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:</p> <p>13 And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.</p>	<p>Moses preparing his people to cross over into the promised land. During the Feast of Booths, it is commanded to read the law to all the land.</p>	<p>Command for teaching and works of evangelism (to the unsaved people in the care of the chosen people). Notice the command is to assemble even the little ones so that they might also learn the law.</p>
<p>Ezra 10:1</p> <p>1 Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.</p>	<p>Ezra discovers great sin in the land, and leads the people in repentance.</p>	<p>Teaching. Example of confessions and repentance in the house of God, where men, women and children are present.</p>
<p>2 Kings 2:23-24</p> <p>23 And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.</p> <p>24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there</p>	<p>Elisha is a true prophet succeeding Elijah.</p>	<p>Teaching. Don't mock a true prophet of God. The group is probably older children who posed a physical threat to Elisha. We can learn the impact of concentrated foolishness from this.</p>

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<p>came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.</p>		
<p>Matt. 18:1-5 1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.</p>	<p>Jesus is teaching the disciples about humility using children as examples.</p>	<p>Teaching. True humility = greatness in the Kingdom. Notice how children were in the midst of Christ during this teaching, not off somewhere drawing pictures. Jesus is saying here that we need the lesson of children to know what it is like to be humble and to be converted into God's kingdom.</p>
<p>Matt. 19:13-15 13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.</p>	<p>Christ is teaching and healing as well as instructing the Pharisees.</p>	<p>Command. Children were brought to Jesus specifically for a blessing from the Messiah. Christ's clear instruction is, "do not hinder them," teaching the people that we must be humble like children. Children are reminders of how we are to approach God.</p>
<p>Eph. 6:1-4, Col. 3:20 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.</p>	<p>Paul speaks directly to the children.</p>	<p>Command for children to obey their parents in the Lord. Paul assumes children are present during the reading of this letter, else he would have told the parents to tell the children.</p>

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<p>Psalm 127:3-5 3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. 4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. 5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.</p>	<p>Wisdom Psalm indicating blessings from God.</p>	<p>Teaching. Children are a heritage and gift from the Lord. This Psalm begins with the Lord blessing those whom are utterly dependent on Him (Psalm 127:1).</p>
<p>2 Timothy 3:14-15 14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.</p>	<p>Paul writes to Timothy encouraging him that Scripture is inspired by God for teaching, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, so that we can be equipped for every good work.</p>	<p>Teaching. Timothy was acquainted with Scripture – in the historical setting (Sunday school didn't exist), what he learned (that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures...) most likely came from his mother and grandmother (1:5).</p>
<p>Matthew 21:15-16 15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased, 16 And said unto him, Hearst thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?</p>	<p>Jesus enters Jerusalem in order to cleanse the temple and to restore it to a place of worship.</p>	<p>Teaching. Children cry out in the temple, worshipping God saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." According to Jesus, praise has been prepared from the mouths of infants and nursing babies (Psalm 8:2). We see here children are in the temple. It seems like Jesus is saying that we need children in the worship in order to know how to praise perfectly.</p>
<p>Luke 2:46-47 46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.</p>	<p>Jesus, age 12, in the temple, being about His Father's business, answering questions.</p>	<p>Teaching. Jesus is 12, in the temple. The first Sunday school perhaps? He's not with His parents. But He was in His Father's House... This is the Christ at age 12. Is He like other children? No way. This is the Christ who is untainted by sin, who is perfect. I actually believe Christ was teaching the elders, priests, and scribes – adults (age-integrated)!</p>
<p>Proverbs 22:6 6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.</p>	<p>Wise teaching.</p>	<p>Teaching. Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.</p>
<p>Deuteronomy 6:7, Deuteronomy 11:19</p>	<p>The context is Moses teaching the people of Israel</p>	<p>Commandments. This is so important, the text is</p>

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<p>7 And thou shalt teach them 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.</p> <p>19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.</p>	<p>a generational concept here (see Deut. 6:2).</p>	<p>found in Deuteronomy twice! Question: How does age-segregated youth ministry help the man of God to obey this command?</p>
<p>Proverbs 6:20 20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:</p>	<p>Wise teaching.</p>	<p>Teaching. This seems to be linked to Deuteronomy 6.</p>
<p>Ephesians 6:4 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.</p>	<p>The Apostle Paul commands fathers.</p>	<p>Command. How does one do this? Asking this question in another way, does youth group help a father to do this?</p>
<p>Proverbs 1:8-9 8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: 9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.</p>	<p>Command from Solomon</p>	<p>Command. Does youth group or children's church help the father do this?</p>
<p>Proverbs 29:17 17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.</p>	<p>Warning of how to engage your children.</p>	<p>Teaching. Correction of children is important. Can this correctly be applied to the child by the youth Pastor?</p>
<p>Malachi 4:5-6 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.</p>	<p>A prophecy concerning the ministry of John the Baptist's coming and proclamation.</p>	<p>Teaching. There was a division of the Jewish people, following the schools of Hillell and Shammai, often giving opposite schools of thought regarding the Scriptures. Jesus teaching would solidify and restore biblical thought, bringing them "to be of one mind, judgment, and faith, and to have a hearty love to one another, and the Lord Christ," Reference: John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. Fathers must turn their hearts to their children first, and then the children to their fathers. Youth pastors and children's church workers need not apply.</p>

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?	Command to teach the children apart from parents.	Jesus said to not hinder them from coming. Jesus says to be like them, crying out to our Father, "Abba, Father!" Application: To have them in the service so that we do not forget how to approach the Father.
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Conclusion

I recently spoke to a nursery-school director in a church. She stated that it is very sad when a parent drops off their children to nursery or Sunday school, and a relieved look comes on their face. Perhaps they are like most Americans and they have their children in too many activities? Perhaps they are struggling with children's constant disobedience? I can guess they perhaps don't have family meals together. What a shame! What can we do about that? The answer is to look to biblical patterns, seeking to know how God wants their families to run, and then model that behavior in the Sunday meeting with the Saints. Let's teach our parents that children are a blessing from the LORD, and that men need to disciple their families.

Teaching the men how to disciple their families can be very simple and straightforward:

1. Exhort the men to open their Bibles after the mealtime nightly, spending 10-20 minutes reading and explaining to the best of their abilities, one chapter of Scripture. If nightly mealtime is not a frequent occurrence in our homes, cancel soccer, ballet, karate, etc.
2. Exhort the men to pray for their families every night after the reading of Scripture.
3. Exhort the men to sing a couple of hymns with their families, praising and thanking God. There are no musical instruments required, and no musical ability even needed here.
4. Warn the men that in theory, this is not a difficult thing to do, but the devil will try with all his might to stop it from happening every day. The cares of the world also get in the way: soccer practice, ballet, sickness, etc. They will need to cry out to God to make this happen regularly.
5. Teach them the souls of their children are at stake. People who have been doing the above for their children often report that when their children become teen-agers, there is no rebellion. Can you imagine that in our culture – no rebellion in a teen-ager? Unbelievable, but it can and does happen if these principles are applied. Reference: *How to Bring Your Children to Christ and Keep them There: Avoiding the Tragedy of False Conversion* by Ray Comfort.

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6. Warn them that they will be held accountable by God if they don't disciple their families. Also warn them that without a relationship with Jesus, all of this is just dead works. And, that the family ministry is their first priority before any other ministry is done.

What is usually the number one question parents have when seeking a new church fellowship? "What are the programs you have for my children?" Isn't that right? Here is a thought-provoking question for evangelical church leaders: "Are numerous church programs a catalyst to the seeker-sensitive way of doing church?" What is the opposite of the seeker/sensitive movement – perhaps a family integrated approach? Is it possible to implement after a church has already instituted programs such as children's church and Sunday school?

Additional References and Resources

<http://www.ncfic.org/>, <https://www.ncfic.org/divided>, <https://www.ncfic.org/a-weed>,
<http://defendingcontending.com/2011/05/19/sermon-of-the-week-youth-ministry-by-voddie-baucham/>,
<http://www.boernechristianassembly.org/articles/2007/12/our-church-youth-group.php>,
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