

The duty of Christian parents

Dear Christian parents,

As parents, you have duty. Your duty is to know who is the boss. No, it's not you. And it's not your children. It's God the Father almighty, the maker of heaven and earth.

Your heavenly Father does not take His role as your Parent lightly. He makes sure that you have His daily blessings of food, shelter, clothing, health, etc. But most of all, God makes sure you have His spiritual blessings of forgiveness, new life and salvation granted you through His Son's sacrifice on the cross.

Your heavenly Father has granted you the privilege and the responsibility of being parents to your children. That is not responsibility that can ever be taken lightly. You provide for your children by passing on God's blessings of food, shelter, clothing, etc. But how are you doing on passing on God's blessings of forgiveness, new life and salvation?



God has given parents the blessings of children. But He wants those little blessings back some day. He wants your children to be with Him for an eternity in heaven. So, what are you doing to ensure, to the best of your parental abilities, that your children will be with you and their Father in heaven for all time?

The first thing you can do is be in church on the first day of each week. It has been a custom for nearly two thousand years now for Christians, that on the first day of the week, we go to see Jesus in His house.

It is in God's house of worship here at Water of Life that you and your children get to experience God together. Your children need this because the world in which they live is telling them everything opposite of what God says.

The world tells your children that they are O.K., that there is nothing wrong with them, that they can do whatever pleases them and makes them happy. God tells them in the confession of sins in each worship service that they are sinners who have fallen short of God's expectations.

The world tells your children that there is no such thing as guilt, because there is no such thing as sin. But you and your children know differently. That's why God tells them in the absolution

in each worship service that though they are sinners they have been forgiven by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Though they continue to stray like little lambs, God continues to love them, forgive them and accept them back into His waiting arms.

The world fills your children's heads with all kinds of nonsense, filth and immorality. That's why God needs to cleanse their hearts and minds regularly with the precious truths of His holy Word. He applies that Word directly to the hearts of little children in our Children's Devotions. He also makes His Word applicable to parents in the Scripture lessons and sermons so that parents can discuss these truths with their children on their way home from church.

The world has no use for God. It teaches children to be self-absorbed and self-reliant. That's why God wants your children to be in church to speak to Him in prayer. They need to know that there are problems they cannot fix, issues they cannot resolve, and troubles they cannot overcome. But God can. But He wants His children to talk to Him in prayer about these problems, issues and troubles.

God desperately wants your children. But so does the world.

If you are not training your children in God's Word on a weekly basis, the devil and this world are more than happy to fill the void.

If you are not in the habit of being in meeting together with God and His family of believers every week in church, your children will not be in the habit of worshiping in church as they get older.

If you are not letting your children come to Jesus, how long are they going to belong in God's kingdom?

These are difficult and uneasy questions. Yet they are necessary.

Your children need Jesus. Not just in school, but in church. Not just once in a while, but every week. What you do with your children now either creates bad or good habits for the rest of their lives.

There is no gentle way to say this ... their eternity is at stake!

I speak from experience, not as a pastor, but as a father. There is nothing that we do as parents that is more important than being with our children in worship – no matter what their age. There is no greater gift we can give to our children than the gift of Jesus. As parents, we are to bring our children to Jesus, because Jesus loves the little children, takes them up in his arms, and blesses them!

The risen Lord Jesus appeared to His Church on Easter Sunday with salvation to give. He won forgiveness of sins for us and our children by suffering and dying on the cross. On Sunday He gives this dearly purchased treasure to us and to our children. Since we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment, we need the forgiveness of sins that God gives to us in the Divine Service every Sunday. Since our lives are constantly filled with deceptions of the devil, we need to have our hearts and minds filled with the Way, the Truth and the Life of Jesus found in our Bibles and read in our churches.

Parents, we belong in church with our children every Sunday morning without exception. We as a family need what God gives us there.

As parents, you have a duty. This is the duty that God lays out for you:

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25).

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these’” (Matthew 19:14).

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Training in the ways of the Lord, worshiping together in church and letting our children come to Jesus – these are our parental duties.

There is a prowling lion looking to devour our children. It is our duty as parents to protect our children from this lion. The best protection is to place our children inside the safety and refuge of the Mighty Fortress who is our God!

I can't wait to see you this Sunday – and every Sunday – with your children in church.

In Christ's service,

Pastor Zarling