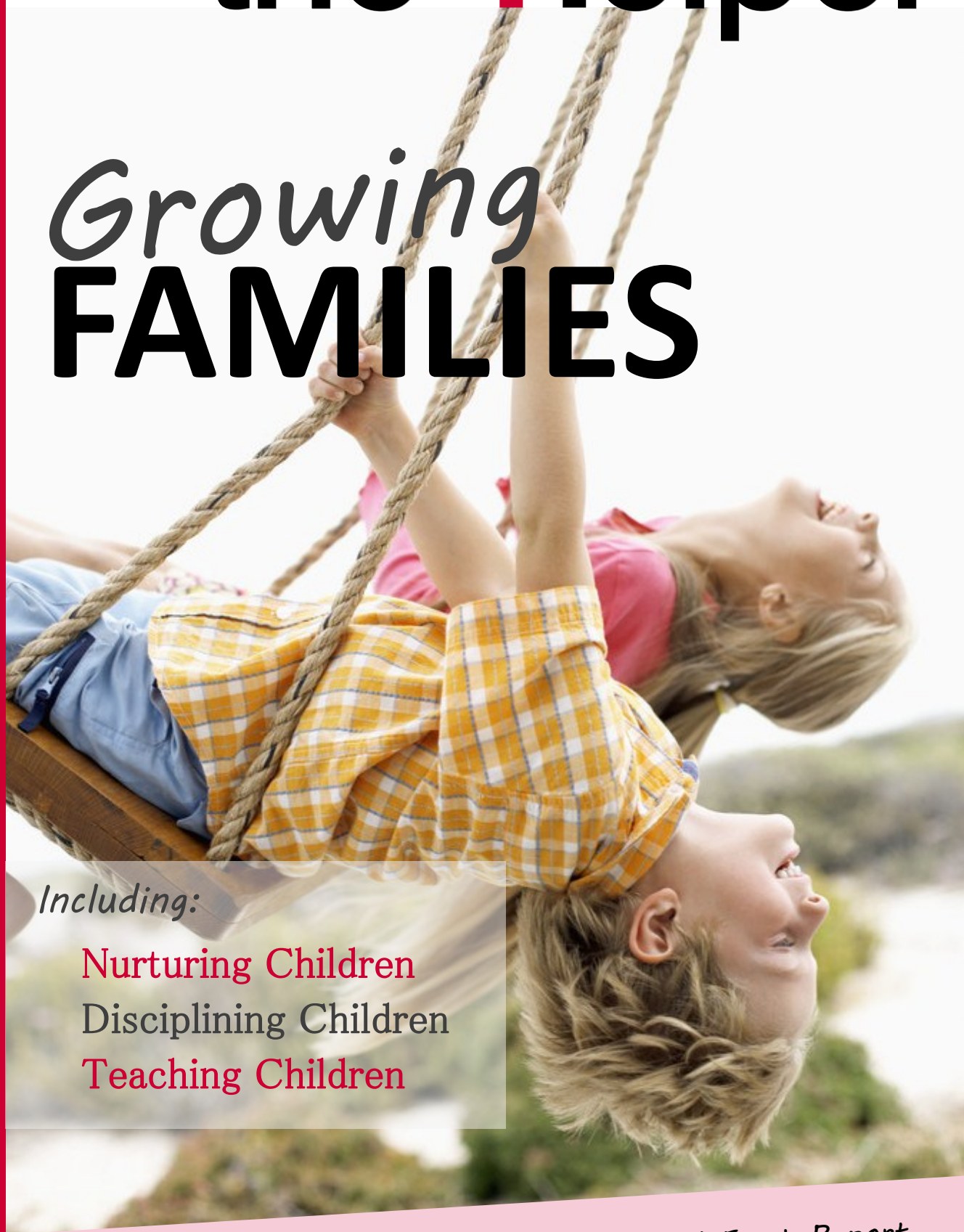


October 2012

the **+** helper

Growing **FAMILIES**



Including:

Nurturing Children
Disciplining Children
Teaching Children

Faith & Work Conference and A Right Royal Feast Report

The Magazine for Women
Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

Contents

Inside this Issue:



	Editorial	2
	Parenting as Shepherds	3
	Covenant Children	5
	Teaching Children	6
	Disciplining Children	8
	Nurturing Children	10
	The Blessings of Growing up in a Christian Home	12
	Report: A Right Royal Feast	14
	Booklist	15
	Report: Faith Work Conference	16
	In Brief: News & Prayer Points from around the Country	17

Editorial

Living in a society which prides itself on a multiplicity of beliefs, we are surrounded by a great variety of gods. Not only those of other formal religions, but also the gods of wealth, pleasure, power and achievement. Added to this is a deeply secular humanist mind-set that rejects a Christian view of marriage and the importance of the family. The introduction of the *anti-smacking legislation*, and more recently the current debate centred around the *Same-Sex Marriage Bill* has underscored the fact that we definitely live in a post-Christian era. As Christians, many of us respond in fear and confusion and secretly wonder if it would be easier to withdraw from society altogether!

So how do we respond to the challenge of living in a culture where Christians are a minority and laws that have previously upheld Christian principles are being eroded? As we look back in Scripture, we are reminded that when God's people were in exile, they too faced the challenge of living lives of integrity and bringing glory to God while being surrounded by a society who worshipped other gods. People like Joseph, Daniel and Esther are examples for us of how to live wisely and courageously for the Lord. The New Testament also portrays believers in Christ living for Christ in the midst of a society that is often hostile to the gospel.

Last year many readers of *The Helper* requested that we devote a whole issue to the raising of children for the Lord. Given the current debate on marriage, and other issues related to the family, we thought this was an appropriate time to look at this issue. What does it mean to parent authoritatively? Where does our authority come from? What do God's covenant promises have to do with parenting? What about discipline? What should we teach our children? These are some of the questions that we will address.

We can be encouraged because God cares about families. Marriage is very close to God's heart. At creation, God declared that "it is not good for man to be alone" and created Eve as the

perfect helpmate for Adam, establishing marriage as a foundational building block of society. One of the purposes of marriage is to raise godly offspring for the glory of God, who will in turn proclaim the goodness of God to the next generation. God promises to be faithful to His covenant promises: "Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commands." (Deuteronomy 7:9)

As we take up our responsibilities to bring up our children to know and serve the Lord, we can be encouraged that although our parenting is imperfect, those around us are still watching. One man married to one woman for life is becoming quite rare. Christian couples who sacrificially love one another and are committed to one another stand out as being different. People are often curious to know what makes the difference and we can point them to the love of Christ. In the same way, families who are committed to each other, parents and children who love and respect each other and have a genuine desire to reach out and serve others, are attractive to others. In a world that is torn apart by the brokenness of sin, and where people are lonely and hurting, we need to invite others in to be part of our families.

We can be honest about our own parenting struggles and our dependence on the mercy and grace of Christ in our day to day lives. We pray that God by His grace will continue to work in and through our families and that others would be drawn to Christ and added to the family of God.

Once again, we are very thankful to all our contributors who have taken time to share their stories and insights. Also, my appreciation to the team who has helped put this together.

On behalf of *The Helper* team,

- Anne Camp

GRACE Ladies

Parenting *as* Shepherds



What is parenting in a human rights culture?

Not long after those little bundles of joy come into our lives we realise that we need wisdom on parenting. “What is my role?” we ask, “what am I supposed to be doing with this child?”, “is there a goal in parenting?” and “do I have any authority to achieve it?”

Our culture creates confusion as it seeks to answer such questions. Secular humanism tells us that human nature is basically good and parenting is about facilitating the good and not squashing it by restrictive parenting. Added to that, an evolutionary view of humanity implies that children function out of an innate and right instinct, to which we should basically submit. The implication of *anti-smacking legislation* is not just the issue of discipline but the deeper question of whether parents are really meant to have authority at all. *Human rights for the child*, adds to this uncertainty. It basically requires that children have the right to provision, protection and participation — all of which we would clearly own as important — but at the same time what appears to be lacking is clarity on human nature itself and whether any discipline and training is also needed. The plethora of books and programmes on parenting may add humorous and practical suggestions, but still generally operate out of secular philosophies of human nature.

This struggle regarding philosophies of parenting and the nature of children begins sooner than we realise. It starts from the moment of birth; a baby cries and we respond. That response is natural, but it can be continued through the early years, so that we always respond every time a child cries and we always give

them what they demand. After all, an evolutionary framework implies that the child instinctively knows what it best and we must respond to that submissively. The humanist framework tells us we must affirm the good in the child and not crush it. So from birth, the child is determining the most basic elements of its own world and practically, parents can end up feeling exhausted and resentful because they feel there is nothing they can do about this loveable little tyrant that has entered their world. The Gospel of Mark records that when Jesus “saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” (Mark 6:34). I find this moving because my own heart says, “I need a Shepherd”. Whether it acknowledges it or not, our own culture says, “I need a Shepherd.” We are always looking somewhere for guidance and direction in the confusing maze of life. We look to parents, teachers, government, peers, celebrities, Twitter and Facebook. We do not naturally navigate life without help. How especially true of children who enter life so fresh and vulnerable.

The ultimate reason you and I, and our children, need shepherding is because of our hearts. The Bible says we have a sinful nature and that we have it from birth. A philosophy of parenting that does not take that into account will not provide the boundaries and discipline necessary to deal with that waywardness. A philosophy that gives only freedom is unwittingly allowing the destructiveness of sin to flourish. That is why the Good Shepherd when He leads us through the dark valley of this life, does so with rod and staff. These two implements function as means of guidance, protection and, yes, discipline and training, so that we do not wander off the safe path set for us.

A Biblical view of authority

The basic point that we must grasp is that as parents we **do** have authority. But, that authority is a **responsibility** rather than a **right**. There is only one who has all rights and whose authority is inherent in His being: God Himself. All authority belongs to Him and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, (Mathew 28:18). Authority is never anybody’s by right, but it is an authority given by the One in whom all authority resides.

And this authority is given as a stewardship for a purpose. People in authority are accountable to the God, who gave them rule, for His glory, for the good of the one ruled and for the good of society. This is the pattern from creation. When God made Adam

(Continued over page)

The ultimate reason you and I, and our children, need shepherding is because of our hearts.

and Eve, they were subject to His authority yet He gave them an authority to rule over creation for its good and His glory.

The place of parental authority in the Ten Commandments

Paul records the fifth command in Ephesians 6:1-3 as, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honour your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise—‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’” Clearly, what is implied here is that parents, knowing they have authority, will train their children to do this from the beginning. Notice the promise attached. However as it is interpreted, it does emphasise that adherence to this command will bring great benefits to the child.

Not only that, the placement of this command in the order of the commandments gives it a central and crucial importance to the other nine. It falls directly between the four requirements to worship and love God only and the five which call for the practice of neighbour love. It is in the home, under wise and loving authority, that children learn to obey so that they may both honour God and be good citizens.

The authority of parents given as a stewardship for which we are accountable to God is to raise children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. That is, children who grow up with the mature view that they are to serve God and others and that the world does not revolve around them. A parenting philosophy that abdicates authority to the whims of a child’s own personal sense of authority is actually doomed to create a chaotic culture of people who live for themselves above all else.

Parental Authority – what it is not

It is not authoritarianism.

It is not the calling for blind submission to parents without reason or justification as though ultimate authority did rest with them. Again it is a stewardship which we exercise for the good of others. And, as we learn to parent, God is teaching *us* about servant-hood and self-sacrifice.

It is not legalism.

This approach to parenting makes two mistakes. It first demands obedience without giving any reason for the command so that children grow up as dutiful people with no heart understanding of why something is right. They have no inner moral compass, only an external dutifulness that may fail them when temptation becomes too great. Secondly, they are taught by this dutifulness to live virtuous lives in their own strength, not by any strength received by the grace and presence of Christ. So they end up

being legalists themselves, judgemental and lacking grace and compassion toward others.

Parental Authority – what it is

It is compassionate.

Children are sinful and broken just like we are, and so we understand their faults, fears and failings. Discipline will still be applied where necessary but in a measured way that takes the totality of the child into account.

It is for the child's own good.

The bottom line is that sin and the self-gratification impulses are spiritually and eternally harmful. It is not helpful to teach a child in a fallen world that they can live for themselves. The wisdom of the Proverbs is to the point, “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death” (23:13-14), or more positively, “Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul” (29:17).

It is for the good of society.

Our culture is struggling with awful and unnecessary crime rates. Significantly contributing factors will be parents who are not there, parents who lack authority or parents who are unnecessarily authoritarian or even abusive.

It is for the gospel.

All our training and discipline is holding before the child, by instruction and example, the God-pleasing life. But it is a ministry aimed at the heart, showing, by instruction and example, that we cannot live as we ought in our own strength because we are fallen. It therefore should lead to the gospel, constantly holding out the grace of forgiveness for failure and the power of Christ’s indwelling presence to enable us to live God-pleasing lives.

Discipline is most effective when practised in the context of genuine love; where there is tenderness, explanation, prayer, forgiveness and reconciliation. Some have helpfully illustrated good parenting as a funnel. It is very narrow at the beginning but becomes appropriately wider as children learn virtue and live within the parameters that God has set rather than still needing parents to provide them. As parents we do not have to pretend to have it all together or that we do just fine in our own strength. That will produce more Pharisees. Rather it is only by the mercy and help of Christ that we can live life as it ought to be lived and train up our children to also live for Him.

- Peter Boyd

Covenant Presbyterian Church

COVENANT Children

As a young child, I loved hearing my grandmother tell stories about her Scottish grandparents and the early days of their “new life” as settlers in Christchurch, New Zealand. Through these stories I developed an interest in genealogy and was fascinated to learn that I came from a long line of “Presbyterians” on several sides of the family.

I have actually seen baptismal records for many of my forbears and have family photos of several of them on the wall above the piano in our living room. When I look at these photos I smile and sometimes chuckle as I recall the stories that my grandmother told. I wonder how many of these people were true believers and if they prayed for future generations, of whom I am one, to know Christ. More importantly, these photos remind me that God places us in families and works through families in His redemptive plan. One of His purposes for marriage is the raising of godly offspring (Malachi 2:15) who will in turn establish new households for His glory. In that way – along with the preaching of the gospel to those who do not believe – He gathers His people from generation to generation.

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

The Scriptures clearly reveal that as believers, we raise our children in the context of a covenant that God has made with all who love Him and follow in His ways. At heart that covenant is a promise to be our God and to take us as His people, to deliver us from sin and bondage, and to have us live in His presence. But it is also a covenant that has a generational aspect (Genesis 17:7). God promises not simply to be our God but the God of our children in their generations (Acts 2:37-39). “The children of your servants will live in your presence; their descendants will be established before you” (Psalm 102:28).

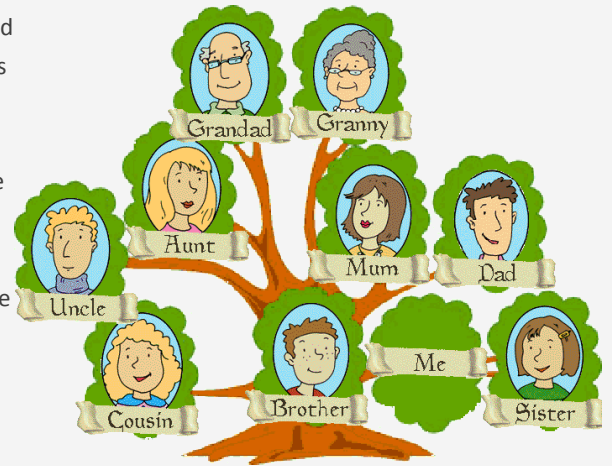
The Scriptures teach us to view our children

as a gift from God (Psalm 127:3) and command us to instruct them in His ways. (Proverbs 22:6). They also teach that the promises, privileges and obligations of the covenant are to be passed from generation to generation. “I will utter hidden things, things from of old – what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children” (Psalm 78:2-6).

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO GOD’S PROMISES?

Firstly, we acknowledge that our children belong to Him. He is not only their Creator but He desires that they are set apart to belong to His covenant people. In view of that, and in obedience to His command, we bring our children before Him in baptism. We do so recognizing that baptism, like circumcision, is essentially a spiritual sign and seal that marks us out as God’s people. It also “signifies the need for, and God’s gracious provision of, a renewed and cleansed heart. It points to the necessity of spiritual regeneration. Baptism unites believers and their children with God’s promised Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and secures their position as his people. Baptism must also be responded to by faith before covenant blessings may be appropriated. Failure to faithfully respond to one’s baptism brings covenant curses rather than blessings.”¹ Our children belong to Him, we are but stewards.

The sign of baptism is also a reminder to us that as parents we are called to raise our



children as God has directed. We are to shepherd their hearts, teaching by word and example that they are called to love and serve God in holiness of heart and life. Raising children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4) means training them in all aspects of life – spiritually, morally, socially, emotionally and physically – according to His Word.

It also means we must teach them that being outwardly good and obedient falls short of what it means to live in covenant with God. Like us, our children need to understand their sinfulness and their need of the gospel every day. We are always to point them to Christ, and urge them to repent of their sin and to follow Christ as their only hope for salvation.

As we prayerfully depend on the Lord to bless our imperfect parenting, we also recognize that it is only God who can regenerate the hearts of our children and give them saving faith. As parents we need to avoid two extremes with regard to the covenant status and baptism of our children. We are not to presume upon the grace of God and view baptism as an insurance policy that guarantees their salvation; but neither are we to go to the opposite extreme and fail to recognize the importance of the covenantal relationship of children with God. The Gospels make clear that Jesus loves little children and welcomes them into his Kingdom (Luke 18:16-17).

The fact that God gives wonderful promises regarding our children, doesn't mean that that parenting will be all plain sailing. Nor does it mean that our children will never go through difficulties or even times of turning away and rebellion. The Scriptures are very realistic about the struggle that parents and children have with the sinfulness of their own hearts and we need to be realistic as well.

WHERE DOES OUR HOPE LIE?

"As parents we begin with trust in God's promises. All through our lives our primary hope is in His love for our children and His work in their hearts as He draws them to Himself, prays that their faith will fail not (even when they deny Him) and welcomes them back when they wander away. As finite people created for humble dependence on our heavenly Father, and as sinners who are in desperate need of the Lord's help, we need to commit

ourselves to pray for our children as the most important work that we can do".²

We also look to the help and support of the community of people who serve God. The New Testament describes the church as the family and household of God. Both parents and children need the support, help and encouragement of others in living in faithful obedience to Christ. Children need believing friends as they think through what it means to live for Christ and they need older Christians who can encourage them in their faith and help provide answers to their doubts and questions. The church is also the place where they learn to serve others and how to reach out in love to those who do not yet know Christ.

As we point our children to Christ as the only hope for their salvation, call them to heartfelt love and obedience to God, and instruct them in His Word, let us pray that

God would be pleased to bring them to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and make them a blessing as they serve others. As we struggle with our own sinfulness and times of discouragement and weariness, let us remind ourselves to rest in the promises of God with their assurance that it is His delight is to raise up a godly seed who tells of His marvellous deeds from one generation to another.

"The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments" (Psalm 103:17-18).

- Anne Camp
Covenant Presbyterian Church

¹Booth, Robert R. (1995) *Children of the Promise* p.107 P&R

²Barrs, Jerram *Perfect Parenting: Dream on, Parents!* www.covenantseminary.edu/resource

Disciplining Children

Shirley Smith is from Providence Presbyterian Church and is a teacher at Manukau Christian School.

As we think about disciplining and training our children in righteousness, four questions come to mind:

1. Why do we need to train and discipline our children?
2. What authority do we have to do this?
3. What should we expect from our children?
4. How do we go about it?

There are two important facts about our children that affect our outlook in raising them. First, our children belong to the Lord. They are not ours; they are gifts from Him, to raise for Him, so that the next generation will be a godly one (Psalm 127:3, 78:1-7). Secondly, it is important to remember that our children are sinners. From the moment they were conceived, they were sinners (Psalm 51:5). So, do not be surprised when they do wrong things. Children, like us, do not need to learn how to sin. They do not need to learn how to be disrespectful, disobedient or self-centred. We and they have inherited all of this from our first parents. But, they do need to be trained in the way of righteousness, to be taught to seek and obey the Lord. God places us in the vital role of training them to do so.

However, we too are sinners, so what authority do we have to discipline and train them? As believers we are people under authority. That authority is the Lord Jesus Christ. He said that if we love Him, we will obey Him (John 14:15). When it comes to

disciplining and training our children we do this with His authority. It is He who has commanded us to train our children (Proverbs 22, Deuteronomy 6:7). He requires us to reflect His glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). Just as we experience the discipline, mercy and grace of the Lord, so our children need to experience these things in us. This is a God-given hierarchy of command. God expects our children to respect and obey us as their parents, and we in turn are expected to honour and obey our Lord. Our children should understand that we are not self-appointed dictators, but rather just as they are under orders, so are we. As we teach them to obey us, we are also teaching them to obey the Lord. It is essential in fact that we take on this task of training and disciplining our children, because if we do not it will be far more difficult for them to respect and honour the Lord. Not only that, but we ourselves will be held accountable to God for how we have disciplined and trained them. It is easy to worry about what our children will feel towards us if we are firm with them, but how much more we should fear God if we reject His command to discipline His children.

As we take up this God-given task what should we expect from our children? The Scriptures only give one specific command directly to children: To honour and obey their parents (Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 5:1-3). As we discipline and train them, we require two things only — respect and obedience. It is helpful when thinking through the practical issues to keep this in mind. It will keep us from expecting too much of our children, or on the other hand expecting

too little. We need also to think about what is expected of us, as parents. Our purpose in life is to glorify God (Catechism Question 1). This means that all we do, including discipline and training our children, is for His glory. Who is at the centre of your home? Is it self-centred, child-centred or God-centred? Children should always understand that they are not the meaning of life – God is. All that we do as an individual, as a couple, as a child or as a family should be motivated by a desire to please Christ (2 Corinthians 5:9).

Finally, no matter how hard we work at training our children and disciplining as pleases the Lord, if we are not living consistent lives before them it will be to no avail. If we teach, discipline and train them not to tell lies and then we lie to the teacher as to why our child was absent from school or did not do their homework, then we are saying it is okay to lie. If we borrow something from our neighbour and do not return it, we are saying it is okay to steal. Our message to our children should be that of Paul, follow me as I follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Now, let us look at some practical issues in how we carry out this God-given duty to discipline our children.

Consistency

Children need to have the security of very clear boundaries and to understand the results of crossing those boundary lines. However, no method of discipline works immediately. It takes work and often repetition, perseverance and time. Rules and guidelines need to be clear, suitable for their age and well understood. Another simple area of consistency is to expect the same behaviour at home as you would when you are out. For example, if you do not expect your children to jump all over the furniture when visiting relatives and friends, then don't let them do it at home. If you expect them to be polite to others, then expect manners at home, even when they are speaking to their siblings.

Deal with heart issues

A set of rules is important, but not the essence of discipline. The purpose of discipline is to help the child overcome their self-centred and rebellious heart. When you wonder whether to discipline and how, look at the heart of the child rather than the behaviour. Is he being rebellious, or is he physically or socially too immature to do what you ask? Ignoring bad behaviour actually confirms that that behaviour is okay. If your child can break the rules and not suffer the consequences, they have learnt that it is okay to break rules. If they throw a tantrum and you calm them down with a reward, they have learnt that tantrums will get me my own way. It may seem insignificant in a two year old, but a teenager still having tantrums could have dire consequences. However, if a toddler is trying really hard to drink out of a cup and keeps spilling it, this is not rebellion but a desire to learn that new skill.

No negotiation

Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no". This may mean telling a child to wait for your response until you have thought



through or discussed an issue. But once a decision is made, it should be acted upon. How thankful I am for a loving mother who was like the Rock of Gibraltar. She had clear boundaries and none of us could budge her. Again a whining, pleading child needs to look at their heart. Point them to God's Word and His commands.

Think ahead

Many confrontations can be avoided by planning. We have orders not to exasperate our children (Ephesians 6:4) and so our discipline should always be reasonable. Your child may have to sit still at Grandma's for half an hour, so what do you have in place to help her to do that? And have you told her the expectations beforehand? Instead of demanding a tidy room, give your child a written plan with time parameters and help them achieve it.

Love

All discipline, even when it hurts, must incorporate love. Children need to understand that we are imitators of God and that just as He disciplines us for our good so we as godly parents discipline out of love. This means there must be a process worked through – firm discipline, followed by love and forgiveness, repentance on the child's part, prayer and then restitution when necessary.

Soak your child in the Word of God

Take time to remind your children that Christ died for them, that He bore the penalty of their sin on the cross, that through Him there is always mercy, grace and forgiveness. It is only by the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit that your children's hearts will be changed. Pray with them and for them. They must know too, that as parents, we too are sinners, we make mistakes and sometimes it is us that must ask forgiveness of them.

Routines

Routines are very important for children. There will be less discipline problems when daily routines are maintained. e.g. regular bedtime rituals, eating food only at the table.

What a great privilege and responsibility God has given to us when He appointed us to be parents. By his authority we are to train His children in the discipline of the Lord. We are to point them to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for them and can give them the victory to live disciplined, joyful lives in service to Him.

Lynda Bayne is married to David, a pastor at Grace Church Ashburton, and they have seven grown children.

We asked Lynda to share some tips on teaching children both at home and in church.

Teaching Children

Rudyard Kipling wrote in the *Elephant's Child*:

"I keep six honest serving men, they taught me all I know
their names are what and why and when and how and where and who."
I will use his serving men to explore the topic of teaching children,
especially in church and family devotions.

Why?

The primary reason for instructing our children is so they may learn to glorify God and enjoy him for ever. "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Who?

God has given the task of teaching children to the church. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Pastors and teachers are to shepherd and instruct the community of God's people according to God's Word; "until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13). The preaching of God's Word is the pinnacle of their teaching.

In both the Old and New Testaments we find that wherever God's people are gathered for worship, children are present (Joel 2:16) and even addressed directly, "Children obey your parents in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1). We need to have our children sitting regularly under the preaching of the Word and learning what God requires of them.

The Lord has also given the teaching role directly to parents: "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).

What?

Parents are responsible before the Lord for what their children are taught. No learning is neutral. So care needs to be taken when making decisions about children's education and delegating responsibility to teachers during the school day.

We must teach them from God's Word to love the Lord, His Word, His people and His world. Show them the need of a Saviour, Sanctifier and Friend. Help them to memorise Scripture. Help them find their way around the Bible. Children need training to worship the Lord in church. Help them to take in the sermon and sing and pray with meaning. Make getting to church every week a priority. If your church has a second service, be creative about getting there twice.

When?

At home, have daily family devotions at a time that suits your family best. Timing may change as your family circumstances change. Read good books with your children and supply them with a variety of Christian literature. Biographies and autobiographies are a great way to learn how to serve the Lord. If Paul needed books then so do we (2 Timothy 4:13)! Complement the teaching at home with attendance at good Bible-based family camps, youth camps and conferences. Encourage participation at Bible study, prayer, and missionary meetings.

How?

Family devotions

You can alternate reading through Old and New Testament books of the Bible. Use 'serving men' questions to open up the passage. Ask a smaller child the



"what" question and an older one the "why" question. Draw the answers out of them. Explain when the child doesn't "get it". You can also supplement straight Bible reading with other books (see suggested devotional list). This adds variety and ensures older children are extended in their biblical understanding without neglecting the little ones.

Add prayer as our response to God. Talk about the elements of prayer then model them as you pray. Our practise was to have one adult and one child take a turn praying each night (it was handy that we had seven children)!

Singing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs is very beneficial. Action songs are good when children are younger but broaden the scope as they grow older and are able to read. Little ones will pick up the words from the others before they can read. Get a good hymnbook if you don't have one. Because we are teaching one another as we sing, the content of what we sing needs to be biblically sound. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:16). In our family, the child who was praying also got to choose what we sang. The children became quite skilled at choosing an appropriate song for the passage we had just read. I encourage you to continue with the pattern you and your husband have put in place on days he is not at home.

At church

Let me encourage you that the best thing you can do for a child is to get them to church each Sunday (unless you or they are sick). Our daughter, Irene, recently shared at a family camp: *"When I was four years old I remember going to evening church in my pyjamas. I had the strong impression that Mum really wanted to be at church. I realised how important it was, because Mum was willing to put in so much effort to be there"*. My husband,

David, was preaching so I was sitting on my own with a six, four, and two-year-old and a newish baby! Yes, it takes effort, but the Lord strengthens our weak knees when we labour for him. If it's too hard at a particular stage for the whole family to be at church morning and night, take turns at taking whoever is well or old enough. If you are a younger lady, are you making it a priority to attend church every time your church is gathered? Are you developing habits that will be "caught" by your children, if you are blessed with a husband and children in the future, and by other children in church in the meantime?

It is important to communicate the do's and don'ts of church worship and family devotions. For example, remind them that it is the Lord God to whom you speak when you are praying. When a person is praying out loud, clasping their hands and closing their eyes helps them concentrate on the prayer. I have covered more of the "how to" in my little booklet "Children in Church". Topics include: biblical reasons for having children in church, teaching self-control at home, helping children follow Bible readings, taking sermon notes, managing small children in church and joining in with the singing.

Let me leave you with the foreword of the latest edition, written by my daughter Irene: *"You may read this book and think; she's got to be joking, who would actually go to all that effort? Only someone with perfect kids could even try that! Or is it even worthwhile? I can tell you that yes she really went to all that effort, there is no way we were perfect kids and absolutely without a doubt it was worth it"*.

Let this thought spur you on—we are but dust and often feel our feet of clay, but oh how great the grace and mercy of God who blesses our feeble efforts for His Name's sake.

"Children in Church" booklets are available free of charge by contacting Gina Young: gina@educk.co.nz

Helpful Devotional Material

"**The Beginners Bible - timeless children's stories**", Mission City Pres. It is short with bright pictures.

"**Bible for Little Eyes**" by Kenneth Taylor. Beautiful pictures and also introduces the idea of asking questions to help children engage with the passage and grow in understanding.

"**Leading little ones to Christ**" by Marian Schoolland.

"**The Big Book of Questions and Answers**", "**The Big Book of Questions and Answers about Jesus**", and "**The Big Book of Bible Truths (1&2)**" by Sinclair Ferguson. These have deep Bible truths made simple.

"**Training Hearts, Teaching Minds**" by Starr Mead. It wasn't around when our kids were young, but is a brilliant book of family devotions based on the Westminster shorter catechism. Each question and answer has 6 paragraphs - one for each day along with the Bible text. Children with this framework are well set up for life. This covers the purpose of life, how we know how to fulfil this purpose, then what the Scriptures teach us to believe about God (doctrine/teaching) and how to live (practice). I heartily recommend it.

"**Bible Stories**" by Catherine Vos"

"**Long Story Short**" by Marty Machowski. Beautifully laid out for use, with think, talk, and pray about directives. While each devotion takes about 10 minutes you need to do a bit of preparation beforehand.

Nurturing Children



I am a stereotypical first-born. I love lists and structure, and I love completing tasks. I love looking at a list at the end of the day and ticking off everything I had intended to do, and then to sit basking in the after-glow of yet another productive day. Things have been accomplished!

This approach to life worked quite well before I had children, and was even ok when I had one child, but as the number of children increased to two and then three... now if I can find a piece of paper to write a list on I am doing well! Often, at the end of a day I have wondered “What have I actually achieved today?” Sometimes, feelings of frustration and pointlessness creep in. On days like that, it is tempting to look at the woman across the street, who is progressing in her career, (and being paid for her efforts!), and wonder if there is any value in what I am doing. Does my work of nurturing children really matter? How am I to go about it?

The dictionary defines nurture as “to nourish (feed), to educate, to bring or train up”. Part of nurturing a child is

meeting his/her physical and emotional needs, but it is more than that. Nurturing involves lovingly caring for our children, living out the gospel before them, and applying God’s grace to every area of their lives. Nurturing our children means

“feeding their souls with grace”

We are not to view children as “possessions” or status symbols — something we add to our lives to make us feel complete or fulfilled (although that may occur in part — at least on some days!). Clearly, children are valuable to God, (e.g. Matthew 19:14-15). They are the future adults of the next generation. It is vital they grow up to be mature men and women who love the Lord, so that God’s truth and love may be passed on to future generations. Ultimately, in the nurture of our children, this is our grand aim: *that our children would love Jesus deeply*. And who better to nurture our children, than us as their mothers? As women, we are particularly fitted by God to work with children. We are uniquely

called to be life-givers. Physically, we have been created with the capacity to bear children, and provide sustenance for a new baby. As women, God has placed maternity in our very nature. We are specially created to nurture, love and care for children, (Genesis 3:16, Titus 2:4, 1 Timothy 5:14).

If you are reading this, and do not have biological children of your own, you might feel this article is irrelevant. Not so! You still have this same capacity to nurture, love and care for children, and should seek to use your maternity in a way that pleases the Lord. Maybe you could pray that God would lead you to a couple of families at church or in your neighbourhood, who you could attach yourself to, seeking to love and care for their children? From a mother’s perspective, it is such a blessing to have another female adult come alongside and help out with caring for her children.

If we are going to live out the high calling of feeding our children’s souls with grace, we need to know that grace ourselves. To be honest, nurturing children has given me a whole new appreciation of God’s grace. I have learned things about my heart that I didn’t really want to see. I have become keenly aware of my selfishness and pride, and how much I desire comfort and pleasure. I feel deeply my need for a Saviour, and appreciate so much more what Jesus has done for me, a sinner. 1 Timothy 2:15, says “But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety”. This verse has taken on a whole new meaning for me since children have come along! Thank you God for grace!

It is one thing to know and experience this grace ourselves, but how do we pass it on to our children? Do we need to work harder or try better? It is easy to fall into the trap of working to be the 'perfect' mum. (I seem to end up there repeatedly, and it's not a pretty sight)! Certainly, we need to be putting time, effort and thought into ways we can creatively and effectively share God's truth with our children, but ultimately we need to live in daily, prayerful dependence on Jesus. It is only through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit that our children's hearts will be changed, and they will experience God's goodness for themselves. We need to be praying for our children, asking God for wisdom, insight into their strengths and weaknesses, and understanding of how we are to raise the children He has given us. (Donna Otto's book *The Stay-At-Home Mum* has some excellent suggestions of ways we can specifically pray for our children).²

It is only as we spend time with our Lord, praying and reading His word, that our priorities and perspective will be right. First and foremost we need to tell ourselves, that we are to be Christ-centered women. Wherever we are, and whatever we are doing, our ultimate goal is to serve the King. Psalm 127:1a says

“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain.”

We need to remember it is the Lord who builds. He is the one we are to have confidence in, not our abilities. Anything

He requires of us, He will enable us to do, and He will be with us, as He has promised, (Matthew 28:20b). As an important side note, if you are married, after Christ being your number one priority, your husband should always take priority over your children (see Genesis 2:24 for God's pattern for marriage).

A lot of how we go about nurturing our children has to do with our attitude. Do we see our children as a gift (Psalm 127:3) or a nuisance? I know that at times they feel like a rather *unusual* gift, but God's word still stands—

children are a reward from Him!

We need to speak God's truth to ourselves. When we see our children as precious gifts from the Lord, and we realize we are to serve Christ in everything we do, caring for our family becomes meaningful. Every task we do — ironing shirts, changing nappies, sorting laundry, looking after sick children, visiting neighbours, cooking meals — can all be seen as gifts to Christ. Our perspective changes. Instead of seeing our children as a hindrance to “real” ministry, we realize they *are* our ministry. God has put us in an amazingly influential position!

Another aspect of nurturing children, is our home, and the environment in it. Proverbs 14: 1 states that “The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down”. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are either building the walls of our home, or tearing them down. Are we resentful, bitter, unforgiving, or hurtful

towards our family? Or, do we speak kindly to one another, seeking to build one another up? Do we aim to create happy memories, and rich family traditions? Is there laughter and fun in our home? Is the joy of Jesus evident? Our homes should be a refuge for our family — a place where relationships are nurtured, where God's love is present, and Christ's light radiates out to the world.

Clearly, nurturing children is a high calling. Children are a gift from the Lord, and as we raise them, we are to seek to feed their souls with grace. Our ultimate aim is to present them back to the Lord, as people who love Him deeply. As women, God has specially created us to nurture, love and care for children, but oh how we need Him! We are to depend on Him, asking for His wisdom and understanding, so that we will be wise women, building the walls of our homes, for His glory. We can take comfort that He will never leave us to do the task alone, but He will always be right there. As we seek Christ first, and desire to serve Him in all we do, nurturing our children can be seen as an amazing ministry, filled with purpose and meaning.

- Alison Gray
Dunedin Grace Bible Church

¹ Fitzpatrick, E.M. & Thompson J. (2011) *Give them Grace* Illinois, USA: Crossway Books 9.176

² Otto, D. (1991) *The Stay-At-Home Mom* Oregon, USA: Harvest House



GROWING UP *in*



When I was given the opportunity to write about the blessings of being brought up in a Christian family, I jumped at the chance. I have always reflected on how blessed I've been by my upbringing, but I found trying to define that blessing has been tricky.

I think the thing that has affected me most growing up, which I am utterly thankful for, is that despite struggles, ups and downs, my parents always lived out a

heartfelt faith and trust in God.

This had the greatest effect on me as a teenager. My view of God was slightly distorted. I knew Him from all the Bible stories I had learned growing up. I knew He was big, strong, awesome and mighty. I knew all about Him, but I did not know Him. I knew about Him, but He always seemed so distant. I remember thinking that when my parents talked about God they weren't talking about some random God out there somewhere. They were talking about someone they knew, really knew and trusted. They had real faith in God, and they expressed their real relationship with Him in the way they lived. I was touched by the vision of the Saviour in my parents and the over flow of that into everything that they did. I remember being jealous; I wanted to have that personal relationship with God. So, it was my parents living out Jesus in their everyday lives that made me want to pursue Him with my life. It was my parents' witness that affected me most,

and, praise God, through His mercy I received Christ as my personal Saviour when I was still a teenager.

Our upbringing was based on seeking after heavenly things. The things of this world are temporary and will pass away. We need to have our eternity sure. We were always taught to seek after God's will for our lives, not to search after worldly things. I remember my mother telling me on more than one occasion that the only prayer she has for her children is that we will all know Christ Jesus as our personal Saviour. Her prayer is not for our future career, partners, or well-being; it was just that we would know God for ourselves. So I encourage parents of teenage children to be real with your children and live out your faith. It is amazing how great a witness it can be, and you never know how God will use your life for His purposes.

- Amy Bullin

Grace Presbyterian Church, Waiholo



My parents became Christians when I was seven years old. Seeing them begin their journey with God was pretty amazing, although the journey really began much earlier, unknown to them. And they took me and my sisters with them on that journey – that has to be the greatest thing about being part of a Christian family! This involved so many things: learning about God together, memorizing old King James Scripture and having to look up in the dictionary the meaning of some of the strange words, doing church together, growing in love for each other, seeing my parents battle with their imperfectness (and mine!) and asking for forgiveness, sharing our faith with others... all bonuses of growing up with Christian

parents. It is only recently that I began to appreciate the absolute

But, if I have to pick just one thing about growing up in my family, it's the unconditional love my parents showed. My teenage years weren't easy, but they were pretty easy for my Mom and Dad. I was lost, confused, and I should please myself or please others. Unfortunately, at opposite ends of the spectrum. And I chose, for most of my life, to please myself. My parents were not perfect. And I am not perfect. One of those choices is still with

a Christian Family



As I sit down to think about the blessings that I received from growing up in a Christian home their number is overwhelming. My only response can be gratitude to God that He has allowed me to be born into a family with parents who have taught me about Him, who have shown me by example what it means to be in a relationship with Him, and who have given me a great foundation for life. Along with the opportunity to know God at a young age it has also been a blessing to receive the support and care from a Christian community around me. It is all only by God's grace.

I was not only given knowledge about God, Biblical wisdom for life and examples to follow but was protected from much too. At the time I didn't understand as much as I do now the

necessity of being discerning in which books I read or movies I watched or even the kinds of friends I had. However, I see just how much I benefit from this godly guidance I received. It has given me an ability to be discerning, to rely on Scripture for guidance and to be aware and cautious of the various messages society gives us. Proverbs 22:6 says "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it". Even though I am not that old yet, I can testify to this being true and know that throughout life the biblical foundation I have received as a child will be of much value.

There are so many more aspects that I could talk about but one which comes to mind first is the knowledge that I have a family around me who is praying for me; people I can rely on to come before God on behalf of me. I was not as much aware of this in my younger years but during my teenage years I found this to be incredibly encouraging and valuable. In times when I didn't know what to pray for or when I needed extra support there was my immediate family who loved me not just as a child or sister but with God's love too. Reading the Bible together after dinner is another memory which comes to mind. What a blessing it is to be able to share in this together and to develop a knowledge of God!

- Sarah Sonneveld
Covenant Presbyterian Church

y that I have really come
e blessing that it is.

one thing that was best
family, it was the
rents showed me. My
sy. Ok, I'll rephrase that:
me, but not for Mum
used, trying to decide if I
please God, which were,
e ends of the spectrum.
those years, to please
n't excited about that
ow, either. The residue
th me today.

But, in spite of my sin, I still felt I could come home, to a safe place, neutral territory, solid ground, a haven where I wouldn't be despised, rejected, punished, and guilt-ridden – all the same things Jesus took away on the cross. My parents dealt with me with love and patience. Most of the time, not knowing the details of what was going on in my world, they prayed for me and loved me anyway. They knew what it was like to live apart from God. They knew that actions often speak louder than words – gospel love is "caught not taught".

I have no doubt that because of their unconditional love, I was again attracted to that same love that Jesus had for me, I could not reject

Him any longer. He drew me back to Himself. Phew. Praise God!

I thank God every day for the privilege of being His child, and for giving me wise, Christian parents. A favourite family verse and now a favourite of mine is, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

- Michelle Willis
Trinity Presbyterian Church

A Right ROYAL FEAST

Inspiration for the ladies of the Northern Presbytery to celebrate together on the evening of 14th July, came from two sources: Queen Elizabeth 11 's 60th Jubilee celebrations, and the fact that Christian women are all daughters of the King. Around 100 women of varied ages gathered at 6pm at Hilltop Community Centre, with Redeemer Grace Presbyterian Church hosting.

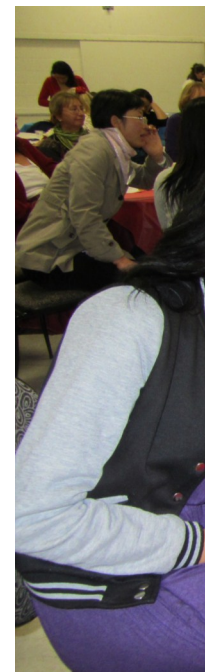
As well as the wonderful sit down meal, provided by many of those attending, we enjoyed sharing with others from Trinity, Providence, Redeemer, Covenant, and City Church. It was special to have Nola Young with us, on one of her first ventures away from home since her severe illness. The Nimo sisters

entertained us with a musical item, and Michelle Willis shared a devotional message on our privileged situation as daughters of the King — our Heavenly Father. Testimonies from Janina Muriwai, Kay Coulthard, and Qwinnall Ngaha, gave food for thought, and thanksgiving.

As we concluded the evening, Qwinnall sang, and Katherine Young, from Redeemer Church, spoke of her impending departure for South Sudan to serve as a nurse. We committed her, and her work and witness, to the Lord. Praise God for this opportunity to share together, in a mid-winter Right Royal Feast.

- Barbara Papesch

Covenant Presbyterian Church



Katherine Young and Janina Muriwai





Booklist

Arndt, E	A Mother's Touch
Beeke, Joel R	Parenting by God's Promises
Benton, Ann	Aren't They Lovely when They are Asleep?
Benton, Ann	Teenagers
Booth, Robert R	Children of the Promise
Chester, T & Moll, E	Gospel-Centred Parenting
Farley, William P	Gospel-Powered Parenting
Fitzpatrick, E.M & Thompson, J	Give them Grace
Fleming, Jean	A Mother's Heart
Hunt, Susan	Heirs of the Covenant
Jankovic, Rachel	Loving the Little Years
Leigh deMoss, N	Biblical Womanhood in the Home
Mahaney, C & Whitacre, N	Girl Talk
McCulley, C	Radical Womanhood
Ryle, J.C	The Duties of Parents
Sande, Corlette	The Young Peacemaker
Sande, K	Peacemaking for Families
Tripp, Paul	Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens
Otto, D	The Stay-At-Home Mom
Wilson, Douglas	Future Men

Books for Teens

Dickson, John	Hanging in There A Sneaking Suspicion
Graustein, Karl & Jacobsen, M	Growing Up Christian
Harris, Alex & Harris, Brett	Do Hard Things
Harris, Joshua	Sex is not the Problem (Lust is) Dug Down Deep * Why Church Matters
Keller, Tim	The Reason for God *

(* also available in DVD format)

Faith & Work Conference

with Jerram Barrs



At City Presbyterian we recently had the privilege of hearing Jerram Barrs speak on a Christian understanding of vocation. This vast topic was divided into five key sections: Dignity & Dominion - The Human Calling as Sub-creators; Thorns & Thistles - The Frustration of Work; From Toil to Joy - The Redemption and Consummation of Work; To Glorify God and Enjoy Him in the 9-5; and Waiting, Wondering, Working - Discerning Your Calling.

The first section took us back to creation where we explored how God made us to be His image-bearers in all areas of life — including work — to bring glory to Him. This means we need to be careful as Christians not to separate what we do on Sundays from the rest of the week. Rather, we ought to bring the cream (and dregs) of our work to worship each Sunday.

We then explored how the Fall (our rebellion against God) has led to work becoming toil and full of frustration as we experience alienation from God,

ourselves and each other and also loss of dominion over creation. Jerram also pointed out how easy it is for our hearts to turn work into an idol, as we fall into the trap of becoming 'human doings' instead of 'human beings'.

Next we identified how Christ came to redeem us through his death and resurrection so that we could be made whole - enjoying restored fellowship again with God, others and in our dominion of this earth. As a result, our identity, value and worth do not lie in our work but in who we are in Christ. We also looked at the story of Boaz and Ruth and how Boaz delighted in reflecting God's character in the workplace with his protection of and provision for Ruth and Naomi. Likewise, we need to see any opportunity God gives us to reflect Him in our workplace (or other settings) as a privilege and not a duty.

Finally, we covered how it is a luxury to be able to look for work that matches our gifts and passions. In the midst of

this searching we should be prayerfully seeking God's direction and developing our gifts. However, regardless of what vocation we end up in, we are to offer it to God and endeavour to serve Him faithfully in it.

The conference then wrapped up with a Q&A time where Jerram answered questions that attendees had submitted anonymously. These included:

- How has the idea come about in the Church that Christian vocational work is more important?
- How do I measure the value of my job by the direct benefit it has on other people?
- How do we determine when faithfulness and work becomes overwork?

Overall the conference was a great time of learning, fellowship and encouragement and we left with much food for thought!

*- Priscilla Camp
City Presbyterian Church*

News & Prayer Points from around the Country

While not all our congregations feature in this edition, please still be faithful in praying for them in their work of the Kingdom as well as those listed below. We trust you are encouraged by what you read, gain new ideas for what would also work for you, and are helped to pray more effectively for each location.

Northern Presbytery

MANGERE

Providence Presbyterian Church

Please pray for Megan Levi as she runs a playgroup, Monday to Friday. Pray for the Mums that have been contacted in the community, that they would be regular at playgroups and that they would get involved in the church community and come to know the Lord.



Pray also for our “Everybody’s Club” which is run on a Friday and is literally for everyone — children, teenagers and even Mums and Dads. Good contacts have been made and again pray that these will lead to regular attendance at worship

Pray for Rachel and Rositta as they take Sunday School each week where numbers fluctuate. Pray for the walking bus Mark leads on a Sunday, that it will help bring more children to church.

MANUREWA

Covenant Presbyterian Church

This year there have been a number of opportunities for women to be involved in studying the Word together, and encouraging one another in prayer and fellowship.

On a Wednesday morning about 20 ladies meet for coffee, prayer and Bible study. We have used a Tim Keller study “Living in a Pluralistic Society” looking at the book of Judges, and the lives of Daniel, Joseph and Esther. This has been a challenging study encouraging rich and deep discussion as we have grappled with what it means to live out our faith courageously and serve our communities well in a culture that doesn’t often value the Christian message.

Spiritual Mothering groups have met once a month for six months of the year with small groups of women meeting together for fellowship and discussion on “The Blessings of Friendship”. Topics included: the role of relationships, encouraging others, being honest and vulnerable, the art of listening, receiving and giving correction and forgiveness. Women have responded very positively to this material and have enjoyed exploring the topics together.

During the middle two terms we started a new Bible study group for young mums which meets on the alternate Tuesday to Music ‘n More. It provides an opportunity for young mums from the church, pre-school, school and Music ‘n More to set aside time to study together while providing a crèche for the children. The studies have been topical – in Term 2 the series was “Just a Mum?” and this term the focus has been on parenting using material by Anne Benton called “Putting Parenting to Bed”. This has a flexible format and can be done in either three longer sessions or six one hour sessions and covers communication, discipline and relationships.

Prayer Points

- Give thanks for the core group of young mums from the church who put together a great Music ‘n More programme for mums and their children in our local community. Pray for the relationships that have been established, that friendships may deepen and more women would come to know Christ
- Pray that through studying God’s Word together, women would be encouraged in their faith, love and serve one another well, and reach out to those who do not yet know Christ.

In Brief

Central Presbytery

NEW PLYMOUTH

Grace Community Church

A snippet from Grace Community Church, New Plymouth - Women's Ministry, by Anne Farr.

First and foremost we thank and praise God for the blessings He has given us this past year since our last item in the Helper. We had a few inspiring programmes during the year and the challenge of keeping our women's meetings interesting and spiritually uplifting continues. Through one such meeting, "The Doctor is In", we discovered there are some very talented speakers in our group.

Another very enjoyable meeting was our "Cake with a Difference" theme. For this meeting the ladies were divided into groups of two and had to decipher all the ingredients of a cake recipe with the help of Scripture verses only. The first group who had all the ingredients correct was then given the recipe to bake the cake, while the rest of us had tea, snacks and fellowship. Then, while the cake cooked we shared 7 messages based on the Scripture verses used for finding the ingredients. We also enjoyed eating the cake at the end of the evening!

I thought it would be a good idea to include one or two of the messages.

1. Our first ingredient was found in Genesis 1:29: "Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has **fruit** with seed in it. They will be yours for food".

Here is the second part of the third day's work, which was not any new creation, but a gracious provision by God of food for all flesh. This is confirmed in Psalm 136:25, "He that made man and beast thus took care to preserve both". Even before man was created, God graciously took care by providing food sources for future requirements.

So, as we were made out of the earth, so we are maintained out of it. This should make us thankful. We receive from the Lord all the nourishment, supports and comforts of this life, and to Him we must give thanks. He gives us all things richly to enjoy, not only for necessity, but in plentiful measure and great varieties. We only have to look at the many different varieties of fruits, vegetables and nuts to see that our menus do not need to be boring. How much we are indebted to our Creator and Provider! How careful we should be, as we live upon God's bounty, to live to His glory!

2. For our next ingredient — **butter** — we turned to Proverbs 30:33, "For as churning cream produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife."

In other words one angry word begets another, and then a third; one passionate debate makes work for another, and so it

goes on till it ends at length in irreconcilable feuds. Let nothing therefore be said or done with violence or anger, but every thing with softness and calmness.

On a lighter note here is an illustration that shows we need reconciliation sooner than later after a disagreement. A bishop told the story of how he was going off to preach after a row with his wife. The Holy Spirit said to him "Go back and pray and reconcile with you wife". The bishop argued, "I'm due to preach in 20 minutes. I will do it afterwards." "OK" said the Holy Spirit. "You go and preach; and I will stay home with your wife."

To sign off our snippet, may we continue to live out 1 Thessalonians 5:11:

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Southern Presbytery

WYNDHAM

Wyndham Evangelical Church

On Saturday 25th August we enjoyed a coffee and dessert social evening. We played games and caught up with each other over a lovely dessert. Andrew and Jan Taylor shared photos of their recent trip to Africa. It was lovely to spend the evening together and have a good time of fellowship.

We are always thankful for the opportunity to have Bible in Schools in our community and many of the women are busy taking God's word into classrooms on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We have a good relationship with the schools and pray that this will continue in the future. The children are very enthusiastic about the Bible in Schools programme and hearing the Bible stories. Many of these children attend our Holiday Programme, which we will run again in the term holidays. Please pray for the children who attend as they are storing God's Word in their hearts through song, memory verses and the stories.

OWAKA

Owaka Grace Fellowship

Our Mainly Music (MM) programme which has been running since 5th March is going well and there is a lot of support for it. Three local churches are working together on this programme and the average attendance is 13-18 weekly. Please pray for the team: for continued unity, faithfulness, vision for the programme.

INVERCARGILL

Grace Presbyterian Church

Our two regular meetings of weekly Bible Studies and monthly fellowship (TOOT) have continued and are enjoyed by all who attend.

In Brief

At the end of last term, ladies enjoyed a time of fellowship at a special breakfast. Cynthia shared with us a review of a book entitled "Face of Britain". It told us how human genes reveal the history of Britain. Geneticists studied people's DNA., and we were amazed to hear that all human beings share 99.9% of their DNA, with only 0.1% responsible for the differences between us. Other studies focused on surnames as they related to names of places, revealing specific areas from where majorities of different "clans" originated. This study of ancestry and DNA led us to consider Jesus, His genealogy (Matthew 1) and the DNA of His precious human blood. We rejoiced that in Christ we inherit a new ancestry and spiritual DNA by God's grace and His gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. As we have continued studying "The Promised One: Seeing Jesus in Genesis", we have been blessed by fresh discovery and meaning as we've considered more deeply the lives of Noah, Abraham and Isaac etc.

TOOT has provided a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other to a deeper level as we share facts and memories about ourselves through a themed Roll Call. It is amazing what can be learned by hearing about someone's special tree, a fragrance, or what she likes most about a particular season.

Much of the ministry over the last few months has been families helping families where needed. Many have been severely afflicted with winter illnesses and those able to do so have stepped in and provided meals and other required care. Currently, a mother expecting another baby has broken her ankle and ladies have rallied around, forming a roster of assistance and meal provision. Folk have also helped others in moving house. We praise God for these real and practical evidences of Christ-like sisterly love.

We also hosted a special missionary couple enjoying a short holiday in N.Z en route from home assignment in Australia to India. In their six years in India, by God's grace they have established a Christian Ashram where "Seekers or Travellers" are welcomed. Some stay a short while, others longer, but all hear the Gospel message of God's love and saving grace in our Lord Jesus Christ. We praised God with them for those (mainly European travellers) who have found Jesus there.

Our times of prayer cover many topics and include the church planting work of Grace NZ, its leaders and lay workers. We would appreciate prayer for the work in Invercargill and for our congregation especially the elderly and those with on-going health problems and disabilities.

DUNEDIN

Grace Bible Church

2012 has been full of activity at Grace Bible Church Dunedin. Our shift to two morning services, "Grace@9" and "Grace@11", has meant there has been plenty to do and plenty of opportunities to serve. Our women, young and old, have been busy serving in Kids Church, on music teams, in prayer, in hospitality etc., as we continue to meet the challenges of

building fellowship in order to "spur one another on, in love" in a growing, changing congregation.

We have just farewelled the American Team who have been ministering here over the past six weeks. We have been blessed by their ministry of encouragement to the girls within "Engage", as well as the gospel conversations they had with non-believers. A challenge for the weeks ahead is for the Engage staff and students to follow up these contacts and try to connect them into the group.

Another bonus of this year has been our "Daughters of Eve" book club. This has been a real blessing and has continued to grow. This semester we have eighteen women from a range of ages and backgrounds reading through "Women Counselling Women" by Elyse Fitzpatrick. The monthly breakfast meeting is a real treat, eating delicious breakfast while fellowshiping together over the things we are learning.

As well as "official" ministry opportunities it is also a delight to see God laying burdens on people's hearts and equipping them to serve in new ways. One such example is a new Christian Nurses group introduced this semester. Jenni McCallum, from GBC Dunedin, has been a part of launching this group, where they plan to meet fortnightly and study a book, "Called to Care: A Christian Worldview of Nursing" by J A Shelly and A B Miller. So far they have had an introductory meeting and a chance to meet together with the Medicine, Dental, Pharmacy and Physio Christian groups. This is an exciting opportunity to equip and challenge young nurses to live out their faith in the workplace.

Prayer Points:

Give thanks for:

- The new people God is bringing to Grace Dunedin and pray that they will be able to settle to be a part of our mission here in Dunedin.
- The ministry of the American Team and praying that seeds may have been planted and that the girls who are investigating Christianity would accept Jesus into their hearts. Pray also for the staff as they seek to do follow up with these students.
- The blessings of our book club. Pray that the things we learn would build and strengthen women to women ministry at GBC Dunedin.
- The two new staff girls who are planning to join the Engage Staff next year. One is an intern from Tennessee, and the other is graduating from Otago University at the end of this year. Pray that the Lord would provide for all their financial and other needs as they seek to give their lives in full-time ministry to Him.

Pray for:

- The Christian Nurse's group, that they would develop regular meetings and that their discussions together would be encouraging as they seek to live out their faith. Pray also that this would have an impact on the Polytech campus.

(Dunedin photos over page)

Dunedin Photos



All ready for a night out at the Pressy Ball in Gore



Book Club Breakfast feast



Book Club Discussion with Karen Boyes, Irene Bayne, Vanessa Blyth and Rochelle Wiseman



Engage Girls Retreat while the American Team was here