

WHAT'S THE "FAMILY" GOT TO DO WITH BAPTISM?



The points made in the parents' booklet about families, their needs, and how they thrive, are self-explanatory. Feel free to share your insights about families – drawn from Scripture.

1) **Family:**

Today many people see and often experience poor family role models all around. It may be necessary to help people to grasp scriptural models of how God means families to function and to grow.

Scripture shows that society becomes what families are.

*(For example read **Genesis 3 – 11** and see how the actions of families affect the way society lives. You might also want to follow the consequences of David's adultery with Bathsheba as it leads him to commit a number of sins against God; his own family then engage in rape; murder; insurrection; and this eats into common life of God's chosen people – **2 Samuel 11** following.)*

The **role of the family** in helping **children to live out** their baptismal vows is pivotal and needs to be made very clear. The baptismal life is understood as **life lived within the community of faith** and as a living part of that community. This concept is not easily accepted by people who live in a privatised, self-centred world of globalisation.

Baptism is **not** just about what I want or need; it does not consist only of what I do or choose; it does connect with a lot of other people

whether that suits me or not; **it is all about God whether I agree with that or not**; it isn't changed by what others who are not Christian think or believe about it.

In a world in which people have become disposable, the Christian witness of baptism says that **every single human being matters**. This is true regardless of how rich or poor, clever or not, powerful or weak, they are. This is a huge challenge to the prevailing worldview. This is only true of baptism if it is lived out in our families day by day – good days and bad days included.

2) *Ephesians 5: 21 – 6: 3* :

Christians are to treat others as Christ would. Our obedience to Jesus is seen in the way that we treat other people; especially those who cannot do anything for us. People streamed to Jesus because He showed respect and love for people and especially those whom others had only mocked and discarded.

Our behaviour reveals a great deal more about what we really believe than we would want. Having authority does not mean disrespecting or belittling people. It gives us a responsibility not unlike that which Jesus had; for all authority comes from God. Authority is ultimately meant to serve God's purposes in society, not our own at the expense of everybody else.

3) And So?

The points made in the booklet are meant to start people thinking about their faith and its consequences, and not to be the only and final points.

Feel free to draw people out to apply their faith in being the sort of family that follows Jesus Christ in their own situation.

4) The Church Family:

Taking the points in the booklet and the points made about families (above) should give you enough material for the session.

It again shows how "Church" is understood in Scripture.

5) And So?

The points made in the booklet are meant to start people thinking about their faith and its consequences, and not to be the only and final points.

Feel free to draw people out to apply their faith in being the sort of family that follows Jesus Christ in their own situation.

6) Implications:

Three points are important:

- the need to examine what a “**Christian home**” looks like. The way we live today often has little to do with Scriptural and Godly values.
- the need for the **life of the Christian community** to look more like Jesus than a successful secular business. This will make the world sit up and take notice.
- the need for the baptismal life to be understood as a **life-long commitment** to a journey in which God works to make us truly holy and Christ-like.

*Are you clear as to what this may mean, and how you will help your child to grow in the life in the Spirit?
Are you living your own life in this power?*