

Nurturing Our Family with Time and Love

"Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind" (1 Peter 3:8)

The second fundamental principle of Christian stewardship is, after prayer, nurturing our family with time and love. We characterize Christian families as communities whose faith in Christ brings and keeps them together. A Christian family's existence makes sense only because Jesus and his Father are real for its family members. Similarly, we believe that the Holy Spirit refreshes the faith that brings us closer to God and to each other in family life.

Family Identity

The term, "family" brings a rich dimension to our understanding of community life: whether the reality is that of two-parent families, single parent families, childless married couples, couples whose children are grown and away from home, single and widowed persons in their extended family networks, blended families and men and women in religious communities. All of these constitute "family."

Families give us an identity in community larger than our own personal lives and our work. Thinking of ourselves as members of a family can bring a deeper consciousness of a shared life of permanent commitment. This is especially helpful in a culture today which places less value on permanent commitments to others, especially in times of hardship. Likewise, families also may bring a deeper awareness of shared work in a culture that places more importance on the self and individual pursuits.

Stewardship and the Family

As members of a family community, Christians are called to exercise good stewardship by nurturing family relationships. Christian stewardship presumes a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation among family members. It presumes that the family will work at good communication, develop a sensitive imagination and foster loving spontaneity.

Marriage

Christian marriage is a dynamic sign of Christian stewardship because it gives witness to a public expression of deep, personal and spiritual commitment. The practice of authentic stewardship helps us to summon up a great deal of needed patience, effort, sacrifice and determination, especially during difficult times. Guided and strengthened by the exercise of faithful stewardship, marital love thrives in an atmosphere of freedom and trust, where each is allowed and encouraged to grow, to be more creative in their love, and to draw closer to God.

Parents and Children

Parents exercise stewardship over the gifts of their children, remembering that they are micro-images of God to their children, and that they are, by word and example, the first preachers of the faith for their children. They give their children a genuine sense of trust and security, making their home a safe, welcome place, and giving them a sense of shared responsibility for the family's decisions. They take time to do things together with their children as a family, and they try to be sensitive to their children's own growing preferences and skills. Parents also allow their children to make choices too, and by letting them know that as stewards themselves, they are responsible and accountable for those choices.

We are the stewards of parents, especially aging parents, encouraging them to feel confident that we consider their lives not only meaningful but sacred.

Outside the Family

The Christian family looks beyond its immediate circle to reach out in love to others who come into their lives, as much as is practical, rather than become selfishly absorbed in only their relationship. Stewardship also calls the family to be aware of the needs of their neighborhood, the poor and underprivileged in their area and the outside world. Stewardship encourages families to develop a Christian world-view.

The Family Reflects Christ's Presence

Could it be possible today and for the future that the Holy Spirit is working through Christian families to establish a more visible and conscious sign of Christ's presence in the world today? Indeed, the Christian family is a counter-cultural sign today. What family members face together rather than individually or alone, nurtures and even insures their commitment to the Lord and to one another.

Standing at a Crossroad?



Choose to Walk with the Lord

