

**Read** Paul's counsel for Christian families from Ephesians 5:21 to 6:4.

**Explain** the following points:

- Many cultures expect wives to serve their husbands and to teach children to obey their parents, just as the Bible teaches in Ephesians 5 and 6. Yet the Bible also teaches Christians to submit to one another. Each family member has opportunities to serve the others in loving humility.
- When a wife honours her husband, she teaches her children to honour their parents and how to honour Christ.
- Paul compares a husband's love to the love of Christ for his followers. Christ gave his life for us. A husband's sacrificial love for his wife is a practical example of the sacrificial love of Christ to his children and to everyone around him.

To introduce the **Lord's Supper**, read Job 1:5. Explain that Job, a good father, made sacrifices for his children. When we eat the Lord's Supper, we remember that our Father in heaven made the greatest sacrifice of all for us. He loved us so much that he offered up his Son for us.

**Have the children** present the drama, poem and questions that they have prepared.

**Tell or act out the story** of Hosea forgiving his unfaithful wife (Hosea 3).

Ask the believers to give **testimonies** or reports about how God has changed their families and how they have learned to serve their families in practical ways.

**Form groups** of two or three people, to counsel and pray for one another and to confirm plans for having daily prayer times with their families.

**Memorize** together Ephesians 5:21.

## God Taught Hosea to Strengthen His Family

Those who teach children should read study #70 for children..

Prayer: "Lord, our families are a gift from you. Help us discover the joy of living as a Christian family. Help us raise our children to know you, and help us show them how to truly love one another."

### 1. Prepare your heart to listen to God's Word

**Find in Hosea chapter 3** an example of a good, forgiving husband:

- How was Hosea's love for his wife like God's love for his people?
- For what sins did Hosea forgive his wife?



**Find in verses 2 and 3** how Hosea served his wife.

**Find in Ephesians 5:21-33** the counsel that Paul gave to husbands and wives.

- What does the Bible tell all Christians to do for one another? (verse 21)
- How is a wife to treat her husband?
- What kind of love should a husband have for his wife?

Find in 1 Samuel chapter 3 an example of an obedient son and two disobedient ones.

- Find in verses 2-10 how Samuel served God as a small boy.
- Find in verse 13 how Eli failed to discipline his own sons.
- Find in verse 14 a warning for sons who do not repent of their disobedience.

**Find in Ephesians 6:1-4** how children are to obey their parents and how parents are to raise their children in the Lord. Here are things that parents can do to raise their children to serve God:

- Take time every day to tell them Bible stories, sing, pray and memorize Scripture. Like Samuel, children will begin to serve God while they are young, if they are taught well.
- Teach them the Ten Commandments, the Commands of Jesus, Proverbs, and ways to show practical love one for another that we find in the New Testament.
- Include children in worship times. Let them sing, present short dramas and recite verses.
- Do not always segregate children by ages. Let older children teach younger children.
- Correct children with love, not with anger, and do not frustrate them with rules that are too difficult for them.
- Give children opportunities to serve other people.

## 2. Plan with co-workers activities to do during the week

- Visit families of the congregation and help them to plan daily worship times that include their children. Encourage both fathers and mothers to participate.
- Encourage the leaders of the congregation to take time to pray with their own families. Satan often tempts Christian workers

to neglect their families. The Enemy looks for ways to weaken the families of Christian leaders and by that to destroy their ministries.

- Visit families that are having problems and counsel them about how to strengthen their families. Here are some guidelines:

1. **Listen** to all the people in the family that are involved in a problem before giving counsel.

2. **Keep confidential** everything that is said. Repeat nothing to other people.

3. **Read** together passages from Scripture that talk about how to treat one another, such as Philippians chapter 2 and 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

4. **Pray** for God's grace to forgive one another.

5. **Help** all members of the family find practical ways to serve one another in love. The head of the household should be an example to the others. As their leader, he should be the first to show what it means to be a servant like Christ, giving sacrificially to help his family.

## 3. Plan with co-workers the upcoming worship time

Choose activities that fit current needs and local customs.

**Tell** or act out the story of young Samuel hearing God's voice from 1 Samuel chapter 3.

**Ask** questions about the things you found under part 1.

**Explain:** The Bible teaches husbands to love their families and serve them sacrificially. The story of Hosea shows how he served his unfaithful wife by freeing her from slavery, forgiving her, and teaching her how to live with him in peace.