FAMILY MATTERS
bringing ministry close to home

Lifespring Seminar Series
SABBATH March 16 & SUNDAY March 17
Unit 1

• Introduction to Family Ministry
Major portions of this seminar series were adapted from the following books:


Introducing Family Ministry

• What is Family Ministry?
• A Southern Baptist distinctive?
  – 19 of 20 contributors to *Trained in the Fear of God* earned degrees from Southern Baptist universities. Most work for Southern Baptist churches, universities or parachurch ministries.
  – Family Ministry has proponents and has earned a hearing beyond the boundaries of the Southern Baptists.
• A “homeschool” co-opting of the Church?
  – Many churches engaged in Family Ministry, particularly Family-Integrated Ministry, are made up primarily of homeschool families who consider their church’s choice to engage in Family Ministry to parallel their family’s choice to homeschool.
  – Family Ministry is also utilized in churches made up of primarily public-schooling families.
Introducing Family Ministry

• Just another approach to youth ministry?
  – For some churches, the philosophy of Family Ministry only applies to teenagers. Outside of the youth group they are not different in any way from other churches.
  – Many churches engaged in Family Ministry recognize the implications of their philosophy for children of all ages and the families they represent.

• A reaction to dismal statistics regarding both un-churched and churched American youth?
  – Some churches practicing Family Ministry are reactionary and alarmist in their response to current youth “statistics”.
  – Many churches have a firm biblical/theological and historical basis for Family Ministry that is not dependent upon statistics-based fear-mongering.
Introducing Family Ministry

• Just another church program?
  – Some churches consider Family Ministry to be the newest trend in Christian churches and seek to add it to all of the other programs.
  – Churches that commit to Family Ministry seek to do so in a comprehensive way.

• A recent invention with no historical precedent?
  – The seminal works on Family Ministry were written in the past decade after generations of age-segregated ministry to children following other philosophies.
  – Proponents of Family Ministry consider it to have ancient roots, now being rediscovered in the Church.
Introducing Family Ministry

• What is Family Ministry?

• A working definition:

  “...the process of intentionally and persistently realigning a congregation’s proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained and held accountable as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children.” (Jones, Perspectives, 40)
Introducing Family Ministry

• “...the process of intentionally and persistently realigning a congregation’s proclamation and practices
  – A process, not a program
  – A comprehensive and holistic overhaul of a Church’s message and mission

• ...so that parents are acknowledged, trained and held accountable
  – Engaging
  – Equipping
  – Evaluating
Introducing Family Ministry

• ....as the persons primarily responsible for the discipleship of their children.”
  – Identifies parents as the foremost discipler-makers of their children
  – Sees the Church and its workers as resources/partners for parents in this regard

• This definition of Family Ministry is based on a number of assumptions.
1. “Scripture is the supreme and sufficient standard for how to do ministry.

2. God has called parents—and especially fathers—to take personal responsibility for the Christian formation of their children.

3. The generations need one another.”
Models of Family Ministry
(Jones, Perspectives, 52)

• How is Family Ministry being done in real churches? First, a point of reference:

• “Programmatic/Traditional”
  – “Ministries are organized in separate ‘silos’ with little consistent intergenerational interaction.
  – ‘Family Ministry’, when it exists, is one more program.
  – The programs may provide training, intervention, or activities for families.
  – In scheduling programs, churches may deliberately seek to be sensitive to family’s needs and schedules.”
“Family-Based”

- “Church’s programmatic structure remains unchanged, but each separate ministry plans and programs in ways that intentionally draw generations together and encourage parents to take part in the discipleship of their children and youth.”

- Also called “Family Friendly” and may have “Youth Ministry” appended to the end of it.
Models of Family Ministry (Jones, *Perspectives*, 52)

• “Family-Equipping”

  – “Although age-organized programs and events still exist, the church is completely restructured to draw the generations together, equipping parents, championing their role as primary disciple-makers, and holding them accountable to fulfill this role.”

  – Also called, “Youth-Focused” or “Youth-Friendly” Family Ministry or “Home-Centered/Church-Supported Ministry” or “Co-Champion Model” or “Family-Empowered Ministry”.”
Models of Family Ministry
(Jones, *Perspectives*, 52)

• “Family-Integrated”
  – “The church eliminates age-segregated programs and events. All or nearly all programs and events are multigenerational, with a strong focus on parents’ responsibility to evangelize and to disciple their own children.”
  – Also called “Family Discipleship Churches”, “Family-Centered Ministry” and “Inclusive-Congregational Ministry”. 
Envisioning the Relationship Between the Models of Family Ministry

(Jones, Perspectives, 45)
Intro to Family Ministry

• As we continue we’ll look at each of these models (except programmatic/traditional) in-depth.

• However, first we need to examine the biblical/theological basis and the historical and contemporary rationale for family ministry

• Are there any questions/comments about what has been shared so far?
Unit 1

• Biblical & Theological Foundations for Family Ministry
Why start with biblical and theological foundations?

“While recognizing the value of comprehending contemporary contexts, it is our conviction that current social trends can never provide satisfactory starting points, means, or goals for family ministry.

…the primary framework for understanding families is to consider families within the context of God’s creation, humanity’s fall, a crucified and risen Redeemer, and God’s guarantee that he will someday turn the groaning of the cosmos into glory divine.”

(Stinson & Jones, Trained, 31)
Biblical & Theological Foundations for Family Ministry

In order to develop a biblical and theological foundation for Family Ministry we’ll need to take several steps:

– Observe what the Old Testament teaches about families; particularly focusing on the question, “Who was entrusted with the discipleship of children?”

– Observe what the New Testament teaches about families; particularly focusing on the question, “Who was entrusted with the discipleship of children?”

– Interpret these observations into theological principles.
Old Testament Foundations

• The Created Order:

• The Covenant with Noah:
  – Noah and his family were spared (Gen. 6:18) and God made a covenant with Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:8-17)

• The Covenant with Abraham:
  – Abraham was called into covenant with God in order to instruct His own family (Gen. 18:17-19) so that the covenant with Abraham might bless all families of the earth (Gen. 12:1-3)

• The Primitive Priesthood:
  – Fathers offered sacrifices/prayers on behalf of their families: Noah (Gen. 8:20), Abram (Gen. 12:7), Job (Job 1:5)
Old Testament Foundations

• The Covenant with Israel:
  – Children were commanded to honor parents (Ex. 20:12)
  – Fathers were to instruct sons in Torah (Deut. 6:1-9, 20-25). Who was training the fathers?
  – Families were assembled together for training, with provision for children who were not previously instructed (Deut. 31:10-13).

• The Call of the Psalmist:
  – Fathers should pass on the theological history of Israel to their children; yet David (a troubled father), is praised as the shepherd of Israel (Psalm 78:1-6, 72).

• The Pattern of Proverbs:
  – Wisdom handed down from parents (Prov. 1:8; 4:1, 31:1)
Old Testament Foundations

• The Failure of the Family:
  – Very few positive examples for families can be drawn from the Old Testament. For the most part, it appears that even the great men and women of faith failed to cultivate faith in their children.

• The Prophetic Vision:
  – Blessing connected with family unity (Mal. 4:5)
  – John the Baptist was the fulfillment of this prophecy, both of a prophet in the spirit of Elijah (Matt. 17:11-13) and of turning children and fathers toward one another, although this is given a spiritual emphasis (Luke 1:16-17)
Old Testament Foundations

• Observation Summary:
  – God created and blessed the family as father, mother and children.
  – God re-affirmed the family in His covenant with Noah.
  – The covenant with Abraham included a call for Abraham to instruct his household in the ways of the LORD.
  – Pre-Israelite fathers acted as priests in their own homes.
  – The covenant at Sinai called for fathers to train their sons in Torah. Fathers were trained by Moses and elders on behalf of Yahweh.
  – The Wisdom literature reflects the pattern of father and mother instructing their children in righteousness.
  – In large part parents failed to disciple their children; the prophetic vision included a response to this crisis.
New Testament Foundations

• Background: Jewish “metanarrative” on family.
• Jesus’ multi-faceted teaching on family:
  – Re-affirmed the divine institution of marriage (Matt. 19:3-6), and assumed that parents would care for their children (Matt. 7:11, etc.)
  – Emphasized honoring of father and mother (Matt. 15:3-9)
  – Connected familial relations with faith/obedience to God (Matt. 12:46-50, John 19:26-27)
  • “While Jesus affirmed marriage and blessed children, he conceived of the community of believers in familial terms transcending those of people’s natural relations.” Andreas Köstenberger, God, Marriage and Family.

– Prioritized faith relations over family relations (Luke 14:26, cf. Matt. 10:37; Matt. 19:29), likely because of the eternal character of the former versus the temporal character of the latter (Matt. 22:29-30) and because of the impending change in covenant.

• “A person who commits himself or herself to Christ will develop a greater love for both neighbor and family, although at times loving and following Christ may be seen as renunciation, rejection, or hate if the family does not share the same commitment to Christ.” Robert H. Stein, Luke, New American Commentary vol. 24.
New Testament Foundations

- Christians sought to integrate the Jewish “metanarrative” on family with Jesus’ teaching.

- Acts
  - Household conversions following the conversion of the father (16:31-33; 18:8), or of the mother (16:1-3, 14-15), are noted. However, so are conversions of individuals without corresponding conversion of family members.
  - Meetings of primitive believers held in homes AND the temple (2:44-47), as well as Greek schools and Jewish synagogues (e.g. 19:8-10).

- Hebrews
  - It was assumed that loving fathers disciplined their children, though the emphasis here seems to fall on *punishment* (12:7-11).
New Testament Foundations

• Paul on *believing* biological families

  – Assumed parents would care and provide for their children (1 Cor. 12:14-14, 1 Tim. 5:8, 14), sometimes through teaching proxies (Gal. 3:23-4:2)
  
  – Instructed children to honor and obey parents (Eph. 6:1-3, Col. 3:20)
  
  – Assumed mothers were gentle and tender, particularly with young children (1 Thess. 2:7) and that fathers were engaged in exhorting, encouraging and imploring their children to walk worthy of their divine calling (1 Thess. 2:11-12)

  • Instructed fathers to raise children in fear and admonition of the Lord, without provoking them to anger/exasperating them to the point of hopelessness (Eph. 6:4, Col. 3:21). Success in this regard was an essential quality of prospective church leaders (1 Tim. 3:4-5, Titus 1:6).

  • Instructed mothers to demonstrate love to their husbands through submission (Eph. 6:22, Col. 3:18, Titus 2:4-5) and to love their children and manage their households (Titus 2:4-5). Acknowledged the special benefit of believing mothers/grandmothers in the life of Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5).
New Testament Foundations

- Paul on split biological and “faith” families
  - In “split homes”...the hope for sanctification of children and salvation for an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:12-16).
  - Claimed Timothy as a son in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2), recognizing that Timothy’s mother and grandmother were believers (2 Tim. 1:5-6), while his biological father was not (Acts 16:1).
  - Also referred to Philemon as a son in the faith (Phi. 1:10) and considered himself the father of the Corinthian congregation, his beloved children in the gospel (1 Cor. 14-15).
  - The many-gifted body (Rom 12, 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4) calls for evangelism, discipleship and fellowship to occur within the family of faith in a way that far exceeds what can occur in any biological family.
Revelation- the eschatological vision

- Most prophetic visions from the old covenant era focused on the future of national Israel as a family of families.

- Some old covenant visions included reference to other people groups, typically seen as descendants of given progenitors (e.g. Moabites, Ammonites).

- The vision of Revelation differs from these nationalistic, family-based hopes as it foresees a time when individuals drawn from every nation, tribe, ethnic group and language (7:9) will gather before the throne where the covenant with God is no longer based on genetic progeny, but on faith in Christ.
The Covenantal/Historical/Theological Shift:

- The created order placed people in families and the primitive covenants (Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic) put the onus on parents (specifically fathers after the Fall) to pass the covenant along to their physical descendants.

- The covenant with the children of Israel was a covenant between God and a biological people group that typically excluded those not related by blood. The covenant people was a genetic nation, comprised of thousands of extended family units in a deeply patriarchal society. Naturally, and necessarily, parents (especially fathers) were expected to pass the covenant along to their physical descendants.

- The new covenant marks a radical departure from this biologically-based, nation-family oriented system. In the new covenant, individuals come into covenant with God through personal faith in Christ. In Christ they become a part of a community that only shares one necessary distinguishing mark (i.e. faith in Christ). Social ties of any kind (including family) become secondary to the unity found in the new people/family of God.

- Further, while the locus of “life after death” in the old covenant was seen in raising up another physical generation, the locus of “life after death” in the new covenant is seen in the resurrection of the dead and the eternal communion with the family of faith, where biological familial relations cease to exist.
• Observation Summary:

- Jesus embraced the Jewish metanarrative, but also emphasized the priority of the family of faith in preparation for the new covenant reality.

- Early believers embraced Jesus’ multi-faceted, new covenant approach and “family” relationships emerged through faith connections where no biological connection existed.

- While believing parents were specifically tasked with discipling their children, they were not exclusively given this task. Rather, discipleship was the task of the Body of Christ and relied on the work of the entire Body, not simply parents.

- The patriarchalism of much of the OT appears softened in the NT, where the father’s “headship” is radically reimagined in light of Jesus’ service/sacrifice and fathers and mothers, in loving submission to one another (Eph. 5:21), are called to manage their households (1 Tim. 3:4, Titus 2:5).
Theological Principles

- God created the family as father, mother and children.
- God entrusts *believing* parents (fathers and mothers) with the primary physical and spiritual care of their children.
- As members of the Body of Christ, believing parents (fathers and mothers) work in a united way with other believers to disciple their children.
- In light of the new covenant, faith relations are fundamentally more important than family relations and provide the avenue for the Church to minister fully to those who do not come from Christian homes as well as those who do.
- Faith relations (brothers and sisters in Christ, children of God) are eternal, while family relations (biologically, adoptive, etc.) are temporal.
Questions & Comments

• Any questions or comments about what was covered in this lecture?
Unit 2

• Historical Rationale for Family Ministry
Having laid a biblical/theological foundation for discussing Family Ministry, let’s look at the history and contemporary practice of ministry to and within families.

We will not be providing in-depth coverage of any part of Christian history, instead we’ll attempt to provide broad-strokes of different eras. Assumes a working knowledge of Christian history.

This session will focus on four eras in Church history:

– Primitive Christianity (100-300AD)
– Institutionalized Christianity through the Middle Ages (300-1500)
– Reformed Christianity and its Aftermath (1500-1800)
– Contemporary Christianity in North America (1800-Present)

We’ll rush through first three eras, focus on Contemporary Era.

Before continuing, let’s clarify what we’re not doing in this session.
Historical & Contemporary Rationale for Family Ministry

Some practitioners of Family Ministry (particularly those who engage in “Family-Integrated” Ministry) share certain basic assumptions:

- Historically, fathers were discipled in the Church and were responsible for discipling their wife and children at home.

- Prior to the last half century, there existed in North America a “golden age” in which Christian families were strong, stable and vibrant and America reaped the benefits of being a “Christian nation”.

- “Age-segregation” and the discipleship of minors by Church clergy is a contemporary invention connected with compulsory education laws and social revolution in the United States.

- The idea of a developmental transition between childhood and adulthood (i.e. adolescence/teenage) is a modern novelty of secular psychology that undergirds age-segregated ministry and undermines the family.

- The focus on age-segregated ministry within North American churches in the past quarter century has resulted in 70-88% of churched youth dropping out of church in college.

I will not be arguing for any of these assumptions as I do not see any data to support them. They strike me as naïve and ill-informed.
Our knowledge of this period of history relies on two primary sources:

- Extant Christian letters/writings from the period
- Eusebius’ historical works from the early 4th century

Several documents from this period indicate that primitive Christians held fast to the NT instructions for believing parents to disciple their children.

They also recognize that not all come from families of faith, and even those who do may not receive sound instruction.

Further, the Christian community shared responsibility for instructing children in the faith.

A few quotes on the following slides will draw attention to each of these.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Primitive Christianity: 100-300AD

- Parents called to disciple children:
  - “Let our children receive the instruction that is in Christ: let them learn how strong humility is before God, what pure love is able to accomplish before God, how the fear of him is good and great and saves all those who live in it in holiness with a pure mind.” 1 Clement 21:8, late (1st century)
  - “You shall not withhold your hand from your son or your daughter, but from their youth you shall teach them the fear of God.” Didache (early 2nd century). Same quote appears in the contemporary Epistle of Barnabas, 19.5.
  - “Fathers, ‘bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord’ and teach them the Holy Scriptures, and also trades, that they may not indulge in idleness. Now the Scripture says, ‘A righteous father educates his children well; his heart shall rejoice in a wise son.’” Ignatius, To the Philadelphians 4.5 (early 2nd century).
  - “Then instruct your wives to continue in the faith delivered to them and in love and purity, cherishing their own husbands in all fidelity and loving others equally in all chastity, and to teach their children with instruction that leads to the fear of God.” Polycarp, To the Philippians, 4.2 (2nd century).
Rationale for Family Ministry
Primitive Christianity: 100-300AD

• Not all come from families of faith:
  – In a document written ca. 165AD entitled *Martyrdom of Justin and His Companions*, a dialogue between four believers and a Roman prefect reveals three factors:
    • Several came from Christian families that were attributed with leading them to Christ
    • Some had received instruction from their family and from Justin
    • One had lost both biological parents and came to faith through the Christian community.

• Even those who do may not receive instruction:
  – In various passages of the second century text, *Shepherd of Hermas*, a character is spoken of who neglects the spiritual instruction of his children and incurs God’s wrath.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Primitive Christianity: 100-300AD

• The Christian community shared responsibility for instructing children in the faith
  – Eusebius relates a story from the life of the Apostle John in which he pursued a young backslider, begging him to return to Christ.
  – Several of Ingatius of Antioch’s 2nd century letters (To the Smyrnaiæans, To the Philadelphians, To Polycarp) instructed both parents and children in matters of faith.
  – Clement of Rome wrote in the 2nd century, “Let us respect our leaders; let us honor the older men; let us instruct the young with instruction that leads to the fear of God.” 1 Clement, 21.6.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Institutionalized Christianity through the Middle Ages (300-1500)

• We now shift to a period in church history spanning over a millennium.

• This period saw monumental changes in Christianity as it moved from a persecuted religious movement to the institutionalized religion of the Roman Empire, and eventually, a major world power competing with various nation states.

• Various factors from this time period are significant:
  – Christian fellowship moved decidedly from homes to church meeting facilities.
  – Christian training increasingly became limited to clergy, with no Scripture in the vernacular, the Mass spoken in Latin, and widespread ignorance and ungodliness among both clergy and laity (particularly in the Western Church).
  – Particularly during the Middle Ages, illiteracy was rampant in the Western Church, severely limiting discipleship resources.
  – Theological debates about issues unrelated to family or discipleship garnered most of the attention of the literate clergy.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Institutionalized Christianity through the Middle Ages (300-1500)

• During this era, relatively little was written on the topic of discipling children, or on the role of the Church in connection with the family within the Western Church.

• However, a few important voices emerge that deserve attention:
  – Augustine of Hippo
  – Caesarius of Arles
  – Thomas Aquinas
  – Jean Gerson
  – Various local pastors and mendicants

• After discussing these influences we will look briefly at the situation in the Eastern Church.
• The Legacy of Augustine of Hippo

- Born 354AD, Augustine’s mother, Monica, prayed faithfully for his conversion while he pursued various philosophical and religious paths.

- Converted to Christianity in 387AD, Augustine went on to become the single most influential theologian in the first 1000 years of Christianity.

- Augustine emphasized the importance of marriage (in the midst of debates over asceticism), including how it related to the task of discipling children in the faith.

- Sadly, many Medieval theologians who relied on Augustine’s discussions of marriage and family neglected this important aspect of it. However, some did carry on this legacy.
Caesarius of Arles- bishop of Gaul, 6th century AD

– Caesarius represents one of the few exceptions to the neglect of the discipleship of children in the Middle Ages.

– In volume 1 of his *Sermons*, Caesarius wrote,

“How much more, then, should it not suffice for your spiritual profit that you hear the divine lessons in church, but among your company at home you should engage in sacred reading, even several hours, at night, when the days are short...You yourselves learn especially the creed and the Lord’s Prayer, and teach them to your children. Indeed, I do not know whether a person should even be called a Christian if he neglects to learn a few words of the creed.”
Rationale for Family Ministry
Institutionalized Christianity through the Middle Ages (300-1500)

• Thomas Aquinas- Scholastic- 13th Century
  – In his discussion of marriage and family, Thomas wrote that the duty of marriage was to produce offspring and to provide for their education. One can reasonably assume that this education included spiritual, as well as "secular" matters.

• Jean Gerson- chancellor of University of Paris- 14th century
  – In preaching and writing he repeatedly called upon parents to educate and disciple their children. Claimed that parents who neglected to disciple their children, “will be held more accountable than if they let their offspring die of hunger”.
  – Wrote a catechism for basic Christian training to be used in the Church and the home, covering the Lord’s Payer, the Hail Mary, the Apostle’s Creed, the seven sacraments, the seven grades of holy orders and the six branches of penance, along with comments on ethics and spirituality.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Institutionalized Christianity through the Middle Ages (300-1500)

• Various local pastors and mendicants
  – Toward the end of this era a “grassroots” movement can be discerned in which parents were called and equipped to disciple their children.
  – In the Western Roman Empire and England:
    • Godparents were charged with the spiritual upbringing of their godchildren, including teaching them the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.
    • Parents were urged not to accept sponsors who could not perform in this regard.
    • Many Medieval Christian scholars argue that mothers were particularly active in spiritual discipleship during this era.
  – In the Netherlands and Belgium:
    • “Household codices” were developed for the express purpose of building up the faith and morals of household members (included the Apostle’s Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, etc.)
Rationale for Family Ministry
Institutionalized Christianity through the Middle Ages (300-1500)

• John Bromyard- Dominican friar, 14th Century
  – Emphasized importance of parents being active in discipling their children.
  – Produced training manuals for Dominican preachers in which he called upon parents to take an active role.
  – Scolded parents for being more concerned with their children’s physical well-being than their spiritual health.
    “If they should see them poor they are saddened and sigh. If they see them sinning, nobody is sad.”
  – Noted that wealthy parents sent their children to schools, but neglected to teach them spiritual truth.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Institutionalized Christianity through the Middle Ages (300-1500)

• Unlike the Western Church, illiteracy was not nearly as high in the Eastern realm, both before and after the Great Schism (1054AD).

• Education of children was emphasized with a corresponding emphasis on the spiritual development of children.
  – By the sixth century, schools were open to educate the majority of the children of freedmen.
  – In the eleventh century, Emperor Alexius Comnenus opened free schools for all, regardless of social class.
  – In Constantinople, children were sent to school at age seven to study the Psalms and other biblical selections, along with classic Greek literature such as the writings of Homer. Parents were often actively evolved in assisting their children in this regard.
The Protestant Reformation brought sweeping changes in the Western Church in numerous areas.

Most treatments of the Reformation focus on other issues, but the discipleship of children and the partnership between the Church and the home were of special interest to several of the key players.

This emphasis on calling and equipping parents to disciple their children continued to influence the descendants of the Reformation, particularly the Puritans, Methodist and Baptists.

Historian C. Jeffrey Robinson Sr. summarizes the situation:

“The Reformers, particularly Luther and Calvin, developed a robust vision for Christian training in the household and called parents to disciple their children. The Puritans in England and America cultivated this Reformation vision and brought it to its fullest flower in the form of consistent family worship and discipleship.”

Stinson & Jones, Trained, 115.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Reformed Christianity and its Aftermath (1500-1800)

• Martin Luther- German Reformer- 16th Century
  – Believed that the home was the initial place of evangelism and
discipleship and that the parents were the priests of their home,
accountable to God for the discipling of their children.
  – Luther (a former monk) practiced this belief with his wife
Katharina von Bora (a former nun) and their six biological and
four adopted children.
  – Considered marriage to be ordained by God alongside the State
and the Church as institutions. The household then was to
operate as an “earthly kingdom”.
  – In the preface to his Larger Catechism, Luther urged fathers to
lead their families in regular training in the faith.
  – Luther quote, Trained, 117.
• John Calvin- Swiss Reformer- 16th-17th Centuries
  – Calvin’s only biological child died in infancy; he raised two step-children after his wife’s death. Little is known of his home life.
  – However, Calvin was active in promoting the discipleship of children in the home, the Church and the community.
    • Called fathers to engage in constant spiritual training of their children.
    • Established the Geneva Academy as a center of learning and Christian discipleship for children.
Rationale for Family Ministry
Reformed Christianity and its Aftermath (1500-1800)

• Descendants of the Reformation
  – The English Puritans

  • The Puritans were devoted to the authority of Scripture and the necessity of a holy life.

  • Embraced and championed the Reformation emphasis on the spiritual training of children.

  • Emphasized the priesthood of the father in the home and his responsibility to lead his family in daily routines of spiritual formation, including prayer, singing, Scripture reading and teaching.

  • Richard Baxter, an influential Puritan leader who was very active in promoting these ideas, wrote that “a holy, well-governed family is the preparative to a holy and well-governed church.”

  • Worship in the home throughout the week was often patterned on the Puritan observance of Sunday as the Sabbath. The worship in the home and in the Church were considered to be interdependent.
Descendants of the Reformation

- The American Puritans:

  - Jonathan Edwards promoted the idea that the family was a “Little Church and Commonwealth” and that the father as “head of the family has more advantage in his little community to promote religion than ministers have in the congregation.”

  - Edwards and his wife Sarah actively discipled their eleven children, with Jonathan leading them daily in Scripture reading and catechisms.

  - However, Edwards did not think of the family as a substitute for the Church in Christian discipleship, but as an expression of it. Edwards also engaged in age segregated ministries to youth. In a letter written in 1743, Edwards wrote...

Descendants of the Reformation

- The Baptists

- Many early Baptist groups also embraced and championed the Reformation emphasis on the spiritual training of children in the home and Church.

- Emphasized the priesthood of the father in the home and his responsibility to lead his family in daily routines of spiritual formation, including prayer, singing, Scripture reading and teaching.

- Also made clear that family discipleship included more than family worship. Quote on 123-124, Trained.

- Baptists, including Benjamin Keach and John Bunyan, produced catechisms specifically for children.
Descendants of the Reformation

- The Methodists
  - In the 18th century, the Methodist movement in America also emphasized the significance of the home in discipling children.
  - John Wesley was the founder of the movement.
  - To get a sense of the Wesleyan vision for discipleship in the home, listen to the following quotes from John Wesley. Wesley quotes, *Trained*, 127, 128.

Thus we see that a significant focus of the Reformation and a significant element of its ongoing impact has been the renewed call for the Church to partner with the Christian family in the discipleship of children.

We now turn to an examination of the modern era.
Unit 2

- Contemporary Rationale for Family Ministry
But first, can you date these quotes:

“It is a complaint, and I fear made with too much justice, that many parents are too negligent respecting the religious education and instruction of their children...I am grieved to add, that I apprehend this declension is much to be attributed to the spiritual weakness, and indulgence of parents.”

“...in these evil times hundreds of families of so-called Christians have no family worship, no restraint upon growing sons, and no wholesome instruction or discipline. How can we hope to see the kingdom of our Lord advance when his own disciples do not teach his gospel to their own children?”
Rationale for Family Ministry
Contemporary Christianity in North America (1800-Present)

• Not just a contemporary problem:

“It is a complaint, and I fear made with too much justice, that many parents are too negligent respecting the religious education and instruction of their children…I am grieved to add, that I apprehend this declension is much to be attributed to the spiritual weakness, and indulgence of parents.” Frederick Smith, 1806

“…in these evil times hundreds of families of so-called Christians have no family worship, no restraint upon growing sons, and no wholesome instruction or discipline. How can we hope to see the kingdom of our Lord advance when his own disciples do not teach his gospel to their own children?”

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892).
Monumental shifts have occurred in past 200 years.

- Industrial Revolution (late 1700s-early 1800s)
  - Before: Training for a trade, education, and Christian discipleship, when present, occurred in the home.
  - After: Steenburg/Jones quote, *Trained*, 146-147

- Standardized Education (late 1800s-early 1900s)
  - Education outside the home is evidenced throughout history into antiquity, but was typically reserved for wealthier families.
  - Working class families in North America began taking advantage of education outside the home as a result of the shifting family dynamic caused by the Industrial Revolution.
  - Two institutions provided education outside the home for lower classes:
    - The Sunday School
    - Compulsory education provided by the State
The Sunday School

“Sunday Schools” began as an attempt to educate and safeguard children running the streets in crime-stricken Gloucester, England.

A philanthropist, Robert Raikes, began Sunday Schools there and they spread to the United States.

Initially Sunday Schools were not religious institutions.

Many Christians opposed “Sunday Schools” on the basis that they required work on the “Sabbath”.

With the advent of public schooling in the mid 1800s, the need for “Sunday Schools” decreased and they metamorphized into their current form; age segregated classes held in connection with Church services for the spiritual training of children.
• Compulsory education provided by the State
  – Under the leadership of politician and education reformer Horace Mann, compulsory education for all classes was instituted in America in the mid 1800s.
  – Mann’s vision was to provide all children with education, including the training of “Christian” (i.e. Deistic) morality and ethics.
  – Mann believed that education was the “great equalizer of the conditions of men” and believed that such equalization would stimulate the economy and aid the disadvantaged.
  – Public schooling advocates also pointed to the dismal behavior of youth and the failure of parents to educate them or train them in character.
• Changes in the approach to youth discipleship:

  – The Creation of Youth Societies
    • 1824 David Naismith begins organizing societies for the “religious improvement” of young men in England and the United States.
    • Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) organizes in 1844, providing technical training and job preparation as well as an environment for Christian conversion and discipleship.
    • Society for Christian Endeavor began in 1881, focused entirely on developing confession of Christ, service to Christ, loyalty to Christ’s Church, and fellowship with Christ’s people among young people. By 1891 the ministry had 16,274 societies made up of nearly 1,000,000 youth.

  – The Employment of Youth Ministry “specialists”
    • The 1900s saw the rise of the “efficiency movement”. The cultural focus fell on specialization, professionalization, and standardization.
    • This movement impacted the Church, helping to shape the idea that ministry within the Church was the proper domain of specialized, trained individuals.
    • Parachurch ministries (e.g. Young Life, Youth for Christ) began employing youth ministers in the mid 20th century. Churches followed with the hiring of “youth pastors” and seminaries began developing specific programs for this purpose.
Three primary 20th century approaches to ministering to families have emerged in the Church:

- **Samuel W. Dike’s “Home Department of the Sunday School”**
  - Popular early in the 20th century, but gave way to other models by the 1930s.
  - Deemed a “Comprehensive-Coordinative” approach that sought to reestablish the household as the primary context for Christian discipleship.
  - Sought to equip parents for the task of Christian discipleship through the local church.

- **Separate Ministry for Family Members: Segmented-Programmatic**
  - Parachurch youth societies gradually gave way to Church-based programs targeted at various age groups.
  - Connection between post-War economic realities and marketing to children?
  - Professionalization, among fathers and among ministers, made this the dominant form in the second half of the 20th century.

- **Help for Hurting Families, Training Healthy Families: Educational-Programmatic**
  - Supplements the segmented programmatic approach by providing support services of various kinds to developing and crisis-stricken families.
  - Often called “family life ministries/education”
• Many misrepresent the modern era:
  – Some envision a Golden Age from 1800-1950, followed by a series of social revolutions that wreaked havoc on the family, Church and society.
  – Some recognize the relationship between various developments in this era (e.g. Industrial Revolution, public education) and shifts within the Church. Oftentimes people bemoan these modern developments, without considering their many benefits.

• Ultimately, we recognize that this history has occurred.
  – Unless we are going to choose the way of the Amish we cannot turn back the clock and preserve a pre-Industrial, pre-modern society, even if we truly wanted to.
  – We must learn to function within our time and culture. We celebrate the strides taken in the Reformation in regards to Family Ministry; we should remember that the Reformation occurred when it did because of sweeping changes in culture, society, economics, politics, etc.

• Living, as we do, in an era of similar change, we must ask ourselves,
  “Will I be content to resist and bemoan these changes, or will I actively seek to engage my culture as I find it with the good news of Jesus Christ?”
Unit 3

• Contemporary Models of Family Ministry
In our first session we were introduced briefly to three emerging approaches to Family Ministry.

These three approaches are:
- Family-Based
- Family-Equipping
- Family-Integrated

On the next slide is a pictorial representation of the relationship between these approaches and the segmented-programmatic approach that has been most popular in Christian churches in the past half century.
Envisioning the Relationship Between the Models of Family Ministry
(Jones, *Perspectives*, 45)
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

• In order to give the most accurate representation of each approach I will rely on the description of each one given by leading practitioners in the field.
  – First we’ll listen to them summarize their ministry approach and why they believe it is the best approach to family ministry.
  – Then we’ll consider the objections that are raised by their counterparts using different approaches.
  – Here I will insert my own questions/concerns.

• We begin with Family-Based Ministry
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

• Proponent:
  – Brandon Shields (PhD, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) Minister to High School Students, Highview Baptist Church (KY)

• Synopsis: Separated Contexts-Shared Focus
  – More a philosophy than a fixed model of ministry.
  – Revolves around core value of flexibility (different things work for different congregations) and balance (seeks to minister to all types of individuals, not just those from stable, Christian homes).
  – “Parents and family are considered crucial to faith development in every area of a ministry’s program.”
  – “Family-based churches retain separate, age-segmented ministry structures. The difference between family-based models and typical programmatic models is that family-based churches intentionally include intergenerational and family-focused events in each ministry.”
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

• Rationale:
  – Age-Segregation isn’t the problem.
    • Shields debunks the “dropout statistic” of 70-88% of Christian teens leaving their church by the second year of college. The statistic is based primarily on anecdotal evidence, not research.
    • Shields has conducted extensive research on the question of whether age-segregation in youth ministry can be linked to students leaving church in college. No such causal link has been found.
    • Adjusting for other factors (e.g. the quality of the program and the commitment of the individual youth while involved) Shields has demonstrated retention rates between 88-93% among active youth in dynamic youth ministry programs in a survey of Southern Baptist Mega-Churches utilizing age-segregated programs.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

• Rationale:
  – Age-Organized Ministry as Missiological Opportunity

  • “I agree that, in an intact Christian family, parents are the persons primarily responsible to disciple their own children. I also agree that churches are responsible to call and equip Christian parents to become primary disciplers in their children’s lives. The real question, however, is what place a biblically grounded auxiliary ministry—such as age-organized youth or children’s ministry—might have in the process of reaching and discipling young people.” (italics mine)

  • Age-organized ministry only impacts the average fully engaged child for 30-50 hours per year. Home and school life continue to be the most formative factors.

  • Age-organized ministries provide an opportunity to reach children with the gospel and discipleship that are not receiving this blessing outside of the local church.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

• Rationale:
  – Age-Organized Ministry as Missiological Opportunity

  • Family-Based Ministry models recognize that people come to Christ as individuals, not as family units, and that children and youth need evangelistic and discipleship programs that have the capacity to reach them outside of their family connections.

  • Family-Based Ministry recognizes that, whatever the historical/cultural reasons, adolescence is a reality of life and Christian compassion demands that the Church reach out to adolescents.

  • In Shields’ view, Family-Based Ministry models are most effectively positioned to address the needs presented by a society so deeply impacted by broken and non-traditional families.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

- Clarifications- Family-Based Ministry is *not*:
  - Activity-Driven Ministry
    - Focused on drawing crowds and entertainment, rather than discipleship. Activity-driven ministry is “...programmatically heavy, theologically confused, philosophically shallow, and have a high rate of staff turnover.”
  - Uni-Generational Ministry
    - Ministries to youth that only utilize other youth and young adults in the discipleship process.
  - Culturally-Immersed Ministry
    - Ministries that blur the line between relevance and accommodation, adopting the prevailing culture without calling for transformation.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

• Clarifications- Family-Based Ministry and the Bible

– The Regulative Principle is shorthand for the idea of certain Reformers (and their descendants) that the Church should pattern its faith and practice explicitly on Scripture.

– Proponents of Family-Integrated ministry point out that the Church is not instructed to segregate along age lines, thus other ministry approaches are “unbiblical” or “lack a biblical mandate”.

– Family-Based Ministries recognize the limitations of the Regulative Principle in dictating every activity/method of the Church (the Bible contains no “Church handbook”) and seeks to “extrapolate broader theological principles that form the parameters for their ministry efforts.”

– The ecclesiological priority of providing evangelism and discipleship for all is the guiding theological principle.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

• Response from a Family-Equipping perspective:
  – Praises Family-Based Ministry
    • For moving in the right direction away from segmented-programmatic models.
    • For their core values of flexibility and balance.
  – Concerned that Family-Based Ministry:
    • Does not go far enough in addressing the disconnect between parents and children, and the lack of emphasis on parents discipling children.
    • Adds to already overloaded family schedules by creating numerous events/activities for each age group.
    • Does not take a comprehensive approach, oftentimes simply focusing on a different method of youth ministry.
    • Tends to focus on events, rather than daily life, as markers for spiritual transformation.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Based

- Response from a Family-Integrated perspective:
  - Praises Family-Based Ministry
    - For attempting to reorient activities toward intergenerational contact.
    - For recognizing the primary role of Christian parents in discipleship.
  - Concerned that Family-Based Ministry:
    - Prioritizes “cultural relevance” over Scripture. The Family-Integrated view considers the family to be the God-ordained context for evangelism of the lost and discipleship of believers.
    - Focuses inordinately on evangelism of children and youth, rather than on evangelism of fathers and mothers.
    - Has inadequate training of parents to disciple their children.
Questions/Comments

• Questions or comments?
• How appealing and compelling is this approach to Family Ministry?
• How significant are the objections that have been raised?
• Is this a model that makes sense in your local church?
Break

• Up Next…Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Proponent:
  – Jay Strother (M.Div. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) Minister of Emerging Generations at Brentwood Baptist Church in Nashville, TN.

• Synopsis: Church and Home as Co-Champions
  – “Family-Equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure the congregation to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that the parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children.”
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Rationale:
  – There are signs of a crisis regarding the spiritual condition of children and youth in many churches.
    • Crisis defined as “Moral therapeutic deism”- Coined by Christian Smith after four years of research for the National Study of Youth and Religion (2005).
    • “Despite strong interest in religion and even active participation in vibrant churches, millions of students in our ministries were unable to articulate even the most basic tenets of Christian faith. Young people are emerging from our children’s ministries and youth programs with the belief that religion is all about doing better and becoming happier; for the most part they perceive God as a distant and benign Creator whose purpose is largely to help us feel better about ourselves.”
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Rationale:

  – One of the major contributors to the problem is the church’s failure to adequately equip parents for the role of discipleship.

  • “The home has the greatest impact on young lives; with few exceptions, if we fail to impact the home, we will never make a lasting impact on students....At best these [traditional segmented-programmatic] models for children’s and youth ministry gave only the slightest nod to parents...At worst, these past models ignored parents or even worked against them.”
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Rationale:
  – In an effort to address the crisis, attention was paid to research conducted on the topic.
  
  • A Barna Research study concluded the following, “...the ministries having the greatest success at seeing young people emerge into mature Christians, rather than contented churchgoers, are those that facilitate a parent-church partnership focused on instilling specific spiritual beliefs and practices in a child’s life from a very early age.” (emphasis mine)
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Rationale:

- Family-Equipping Ministry seeks to address this need for partnership through synchronizing and restructuring every age-organized ministry around the focus of partnering with parents by:

  • Engaging and equipping parents as their children’s primary disciplers.

  • Partnering with parents to develop a definite plan for their children’s Christian formation.

  • “Our ultimate goal is to bring the home and the church together in a biblical partnership to raise up a generation that loves God and loves others. In the simplest possible terms, our goal became discipleship through partnership.”
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Rationale:
  – Ultimately, Family-Equipping Ministries look to Scripture and the testimony of Christian history for support of the idea that the Church and the home should partner in discipleship.

  • The biblical/theological basis identified by Family-Equipping Ministries mirrors that provided in this seminar series, although it can tend toward a somewhat more patriarchal tone, and seems to neglect the covenantal shift.

  • The historical background identified by Family-Equipping Ministries is similar to that provided in this seminar series, although it can tend toward a “Golden Age” perspective, overlooking the mixed record of Church history.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

Challenges to Embracing Family-Equipping Ministry:

- The Spiritual Roadblock
  - If this is God’s desire, the Enemy will resist.
  - Changes to traditional ways of doing things are difficult.

- The Organizational Roadblock
  - Most churches are organized with the pastor operating as CEO and ministry professionals/key leaders providing spiritual services for consumer-attendees.
  - A biblical model of Ephesians 4 equipping must be recovered.

- The Time Roadblock
  - Change to a Family-Equipping model will take time. Churches making the change should focus on what they could look like in five years, rather than in one year.

- The Programmatic Roadblock
  - If Family-Equipping Ministry is treated as an additional program to be added to the slate of other programs it will fail. It only works as a comprehensive re-envisioning of the Church’s proclamation and practice.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Response from a Family-Integrated perspective:
  – Praises Family-Equipping Ministry:
    • Understanding the primacy of the home in the discipleship of the next generation and commitment to equipping parents.
    • Encourages parents and children to serve side-by-side.
    • Recognizes the holistic nature of intergenerational unity...not just another “program”.
  – Concerned that Family-Equipping Ministry (pg. 169ff):
    • Does not leave parents enough time to disciple their children.
    • Does not make a clarion call for men to be leaders.
    • Does not provide for holding negligent parents accountable.
    • Should make a clean break from all age-segregated activities.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Equipping

• Response from a Family-Based perspective:
  – Praises Family-Equipping Ministry:
    • Championing church and home in the process of reaching and discipling families.
    • Assessing and adjusting failing ministry practices.
    • Prioritizes ministry to young people within church structure.
    • Effectively engaging and supporting intact parental units.
  – Concerned that Family-Equipping Ministry:
    • Lacks sufficient rationale (answers what and how, not why).
    • Is limited by an inadequate “strategic question”, i.e. “Is this God’s best for families?”
    • Lacks an aggressive missional posture (pg. 177).
Questions/Comments

• Questions or comments?
• How appealing and compelling is this approach to Family Ministry?
• How significant are the objections that have been raised?
• Is this a model that makes sense in your local church?
Break

- Up Next...Family-Ministry Models: Family-Integrated
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Proponent:
  – Paul Renfro (MA, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary), Pastor of Discipleship, Grace Family Baptist Church (TX), Director of the Alliance for Church and Family Restoration.

• Synopsis: Family-Driven Faith
  – “...we affirm that the biblical family is a scripturally ordered household of parents, children and sometimes others (such as singles, widows, divorcees, or grandparents), forming the God-ordained building blocks of the church...We...reject the church’s implementation of modern individualism by fragmenting the family through age-graded, peer-oriented, and special-interest classes, thus preventing rather than promoting family unity.”
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Rationale:

  – Recognizes a crisis among churched youth.

    • “A large part of the problem is that the church and the home are no longer the primary influences in teenagers’ lives.” Smith quote, Perspectives, 67-68.

    • Believes that “As the church is reformed and as fathers embrace their responsibility to disciple their families as part of the fabric of their daily lives, we will glimpse a rising generation of Christian young men and women carrying the torch of the gospel to their generation.”

    • Believes that churches that segregate along age/gender lines are perpetuating a rift between parents and children.

    • Believes that most churches are delinquent in training fathers to lead their homes and most fathers are delinquent in doing so.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Rationale: Biblical/Historical
  – Fathers were responsible to train their families in God’s ways
    • God’s commission to Abraham (Gen. 18:19), and to the fathers in Israel (Deut. 6, Psalm 78).
    • Cite Ephesians 6:4, Col. 3:23 as evidence of “no change” in this regard.
  – Age integration was normative in communities of faith
    • “Never in Scripture do we find an example of systematic age segregation in temple, synagogue, church.”
    • Quotes several passages of Scripture that mention or imply the presence of children in Jewish or Christian assemblies (ranging from the million plus Israelites in the wilderness to house churches in the NT).
  – Families historically worshipped God together
    • Cites OT examples of fathers erecting altars and serving as priests.
    • Skips roughly 4000 years of history and quotes from two 19th century preachers’ call for fathers to lead times of family worship in their homes.
  – Connects perceived decline in the first two of these points with the perceived decline in the final point
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Shared Distinctives of Family-Integrated Churches:
  – Commitment to Age-Integrated Ministry

  • “The family-integrated church movement [is identifiable] in its insistence on integration as an ecclesiological principle...Our church has no youth ministers, children’s ministers, or nursery. We do not divide families into component parts.” Voddie Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*.

  • “Different generations worship together, learn together, serve together, and fellowship together. Family-integrated churches follow the biblical pattern of intergenerational worship and learning (Deut 29:10-11; Josh 8:35; 2 Chron 20:13; Joel 2:16).”

  • “Placing peers together is a formula for deepening and perpetuating immaturity. Early Christians clearly recognized this truth...Intergenerational influences and age-integration, on the other hand, encourage healthy processes of maturation.” *Didascalia Apostolorum* quote, *Perspectives*, 62-63.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Shared Distinctives of Family-Integrated Churches:
  – Commitment to Evangelism and Discipleship In and Through the Home
    • “In family integrated churches the father’s role as spiritual leader is not an empty title. It is a serious, sacred task that the church equips him to pursue and holds him accountable to fulfill.”
    • “The home is the best context for discipleship, and the family is also the best context for evangelism of persons outside the church. That’s how the apostle Paul evangelized in the first century AD.” Greenway & Monsma quote, Perspectives, 63-64.
    • Envisions evangelism occurring with neighbors and friends interacting with families, and occasional adult male outreach events.
    • Envisions discipleship for men in the context of the church, including adult male small groups, with the expectation that these men will in turn disciple their wives, children and individuals who are not connected to a family in the church.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Shared Distinctives of Family-Integrated Churches:
  – Commitment to Biblical Leadership
    • Emphasize the instructions in 1 Tim. 3:4, Titus 1:6 as paramount in the selection of local church leadership.
    • Asserts that “Home is the ideal training ground for church leadership. A church that sees reformation in families will be a church where biblically qualified pastors shepherd the congregation.”
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Challenges to Transitioning to a Family-Integrated Model:
  – Rebuilding Relationship Broken by Age Segregation
    • Considers church sponsored peer groups to pose a risk to parent-children relationships.
  – Training Husbands and Wives in Their God-Ordained Roles
    • Considers the husband to be head, pastor and leader of the home. Women are to follow and submit.
    • Implication of the division of duties indicates embrace of traditional gender roles.
  – Training Children in Family Integration
    • Focused primarily on keeping children quiet and attentive in a service that is explicitly designed for adults. Renfro quote, *Training*, 75.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

Measuring Success in Family-Integrated Churches

- Not through attendance, membership retention, budgets, numbers, salaries, or maintaining the organization. Rather, through fidelity to biblical guidelines. “A church is successful only to the degree that it lines up with Scripture in these areas.”

1. Reflects the ideal structure of New Testament churches
2. Church’s leadership meets the biblical qualifications
3. Utilizes biblical leadership structures
4. Preaching that is faithful to the text of Scripture
5. Men leading their families
6. Parents disciplining their children
7. Wives helping and submitting to their husbands
8. Children obeying the fifth commandment
9. Ministries of intergenerational discipleship reflecting Titus 2:1-8
10. Practice hospitality toward one another and the world
11. Engaging in biblical evangelism
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Response from a Family-Equipping perspective:
  – Praises Family-Integrated Ministry:
    • For seeking to recover the biblical connection between families and faith communities
    • For its appealing clarity, focus and simplicity
    • For challenging men to be spiritual leaders
  – Concerned that Family-Integrated Ministry:
    • Presents an approach that is difficult, if not impossible, for most North American churches to adopt.
    • Is lacking in structure and methodology to “reach nontraditional families and help these families understand themselves as full participants in the body of Christ” Strother quote, *Perspectives*, 87.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Response from a Family-Equipping perspective:
  – Challenges Assumptions of Family-Integrated Model:
    • The link between age-organized ministry and keeping the administrative machinery running.
    • The rejection of the “myth of adolescence” rather than recognizing the social/cultural phenomena and addressing it.
    • The unqualified concern about placing peers together.
    • The prayer for unreached people groups while neglecting the typical American teenage or member of broken/split home.
    • The concern about parents losing the hearts of their children to youth groups.
Family Ministry Models: Family-Integrated

• Response from a Family-Based perspective:
  – Praises Family-Integrated Ministry:
    • For heartfelt love, fellowship and inter/intra-action of families
    • Focus on intergenerational contact
  – Concerned that Family-Integrated Ministry:
    • Misunderstands the nature and structure of the Church in describing it as a “family of families”. Shields quote, Perspectives, 80, 81.
    • Is structured in such a way to repel non-intact, non-homeschooling families, thus only attracting 2% of the student population.
    • Selectively segregate along gender and age lines while claiming that they reject segregation. Shields quote, Perspectives, 83.
Questions/Comments

- Questions or comments?
- How appealing and compelling is this approach to Family Ministry?
- How significant are the objections that have been raised?
- Is this a model that makes sense in your local church?
Unit 4

• Implementing Family Ministry in the Local Church
Implementing Family Ministry in the Local Church

• Perhaps you’re thinking, I’m a parent, leader, teacher, board member, etc. and I have a passion for seeing the church partner with parents in the discipleship of their children:
  – How do I help my church transition from its current approach to a Family-Ministry approach?

• Biblical governance and COG7 polity both support the reality that leaders lead.
  – Embracing a Family-Ministry approach will take a shared vision and commitment on the part of the pastor(s) and elders.
  – Concerned members can pray, share, and support the leadership in recognizing the importance of Family Ministry.
  – This presentation focuses on the work of leaders in implementing a Family-Ministry approach.
Implementing Family Ministry in the Local Church

• Rather than *theorize* on how a church *might* transition to a Family Ministry model, we’ll look at the pathway that has proved effective in a number of churches.

  – This presentation will rely heavily on “Making the Transition to Family-Equipping Ministry” by Jay Strother, in *Trained in the Fear of God*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones.

  – Along the way I’ll add personal insights based on experience in a Family-Equipping congregation and how I think this implementation model might be effectively utilized in Church of God (Seventh Day) congregations.
Implementing Family Ministry in the Local Church

- Our presentation will treat the implementation of Family Ministry like the building of a house:
  - Five Foundational Platforms for Family-Equipping Ministry
  - Framework for a Family Equipping Culture

- Then we’ll end with some time for discussion and the sharing of some resources for those who want to learn more.
Implementing Family Ministry in the Local Church

• Five Foundational Platforms for Family-Equipping Ministry

1. Rediscover the richness of a biblical perspective on the roles of the church and family (biblical/theological foundations must be firmly laid in place)

2. Listen (Look for the threads in surveys, listen to the questions in stories, what are the pressing needs, what assets exist)

3. Repent of previous idolatries (Honestly evaluate and name ways in which past ministry to children fell short of God’s desire)

4. Be authentic (discipling of children in the home begins with the leaders who want to implement changes)

5. Develop a team (implementation is too big and too important a job for one person, even the senior pastor, rely on Body ministry and equip the team for the task)
Implementing Family Ministry in the Local Church

• Framework for a Family-Equipping Culture

1. Agree on a model and cast the vision (be clear on the model so you can be clear in the vision)

2. Develop strategies (evaluate, rely on resources and ask the “strategic question”)

3. Over-communicate the vision (in every form of verbal and written church communication)

4. Implement strategies (incrementally, comprehensively)

5. Learn by continually evaluating progress (surveys, stories)
Implementing Family Ministry in the Local Church

• Resources for the journey:
  – LifeSpring’s class, FAM 301 Introduction to Family Ministry
  – Foundation Books:
    • *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones
    • *A Theology of Family Ministries*, ed. Michael & Michelle Anthony
    • *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones
  – Framework Books:
    • *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*, Timothy Paul Jones
    • *Family Based Youth Ministry*, Mark Devries
    • *ReThink*, Steve Wright
    • *Family-Driven Faith*, Voddie Baucham
Questions/Comments?

• What questions or comments do you have?
• What has made the biggest impact on you during this seminar series?
• What challenges do you see in implementing a Family Ministry approach?
• What role can you play in implementing Family Ministry in your local church?
• Where do we go from here?