

Balancing Family Time and Ministry

God has given us our families and has also called us to our ministries, but we need to learn to balance these two important facets of our responsibilities.

People and ministers of the Gospel have put their ministries before the families for far too long. As a result, far too many marriages and relationships have been broken or lost.

Some have mistakenly believed that if they take care of God's work, He will take care of their family. However, we need to remember that God has given us very plain guidelines concerning our responsibility to our spouses and to our children.

I like the often-quoted priority list: God first, spouse second, children third, and ministry fourth.

The Bible does not lay out a step-by-step order for family relationship priorities. However, we can look to the Scriptures and find general principles for prioritizing our family relationships.

God obviously comes first: [Deuteronomy 6:5](#), "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." All of one's heart, soul, and strength is to be committed to loving God, making Him the first priority.

If you are married, your spouse comes next. A married man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church ([Ephesians 5:25](#)). Christ's first priority—after obeying and glorifying the Father—was the church.

This is the same example a husband should follow: God first, then his wife and family. A man that loves his wife and family will give himself for them regardless of circumstances. A Wife that loves her husband will do the same – submitting to him as recorded in ([Ephesians 5:22](#)). A couple has a responsibility to honor, respect and love each other and placing priority in building a health relationship.

The blessings of such an attitude and actions in turn elevates the couples in the eyes of God. Additionally, this brings **contentment, satisfaction and security** to the couple in their marriage.

Time for family should be prioritized

One of the most used phrases we hear a lot when couples don't want to make for each other is, "I don't have time." That is never true. We all have the same amount of time.

We all have 24 hours every day and 60 minutes in each hour. We just need to learn to prioritize our time. When we say, "we don't have time," what we are really saying is, "This is not a high priority with me." You will never have time for anything unless you make it a priority!

The Four Practical Ways to Guard Your Time And Family

1. Pray for wisdom - James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Ask God to give you wisdom and discernment for how best to balance ministry leadership and commitments to your family. He will be faithful in making a way for you. Often you'll find yourself trying to serve the members in your church and your family in your own strength. That can go on for a while, but it will ultimately lead to burnout. Ask your leadership team to cover you in prayer and to hold you accountable about keeping careful boundaries for balancing ministry and family time.

2. Protect family time.

We can get used to a certain rhythm of ministry focus in such a way that we forget our family and spending time with them. Before we know it, most of our energy and time can be poured into the ministries we're leading while our families get less of us.

3. Guard against pride.

As leaders, it's easy to fall into a messiah complex of thinking those we serve need us as much as they need Jesus! Or that He couldn't do this ministry stuff without us.

Pride can be our undoing as ministry leaders. I had a deep fear of disappointing the women I served, which led to long hours, exhaustion, and forfeiting time with my family.

Proverbs 16:18-19 (KJV)

¹⁸ Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

¹⁹ Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

4. Be bold.

Often the boundary lines on your time as a ministry leader can keep getting moved as your church or ministry grows and the top leaders expect more of your time. Sometimes we have to be bold and say, “Enough! My family needs me at home more than the church needs me.”

Sometimes you have to boldly say statements like, “No, I can’t be at the church right now.” “I can’t do it now” needed support.

When you say that, many may not understand what you mean and may even get offended, but it is to your good and at times for their benefits. You are also exemplifying leadership. You boldly declare things like - “I need to be home right now with my family,”. I encourage you to be bold to put your family first, as that is your highest calling.

Seek our faithful God for His wisdom and discernment. He will make a way for you to balance your focus on ministry leadership and your family.

Conclusion

A. Marriage Is God’s Plan—Genesis 2:20–25

1. Woman taken from Adam’s rib
2. The priority of this relationship - verse 24a
3. The unity of the marriage relationship - verse 24b
4. The transparent relationship intended - verse 25
5. The permanence of the union - Matthew 19:3–6

We need to understand that the scriptural order of priorities is God, spouse, children, parents, extended family, brothers and sisters in Christ, and then the rest of the world.

While sometimes decisions must be made to focus on one person over another, the goal is to not neglect any of our relationships.

The Biblical balance is allowing God to empower us to meet all of our relationship priorities, inside and outside our families.

One of the best ways to model a living, active relationship with Christ is to emphasize the importance of the Bible in your family's day-to-day life. You can hide God's Word in your own heart and the hearts of your children by learning verses as a family and discussing together what those verses mean in your lives

The Bible has a lot to say about marriage, so let's make a "Top Ten List" of the most important Bible texts about marriage

1) Mark 10:6-9 = God instituted marriage and gives it His blessing. (See also Genesis 1:27, 28; Hebrews 13:4)

2) Genesis 2:18 = God created humans with an innate need and desire for the close bond that marriage provides. (See also Proverbs 18:22)

3) Genesis 2:23, 24 = Husband and wife are "one" in the marriage bond. (See also Matthew 19:5, 6)

4) Ecclesiastes 9:9 = Marriage is a lifelong commitment. (See also Proverbs 5:18)

5) Ephesians 5:28, 33 = Husbands and wives are to love and respect each other.

6) II Corinthians 6:14 = Husbands and wives should be bonded together with a similarity of beliefs, goals, and objectives. (See also Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; Genesis 24:3, 4)

7) Exodus 20:17 = Husbands and wives are to be sexually faithful to each other in the marriage relationship. (See also Leviticus 18:20)

8) Matthew 5:32 = Adultery is the only biblically acceptable reason for divorce.

9) Isaiah 62:5 = An ideal marriage relationship mirrors God's loving relationship with His people. (See also Isaiah 54:5; Ephesians 5:25)

10) Proverbs 31:10 = A strong marriage relationship is a precious thing.
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