

REDEEMING AND CELEBRATING FATHERHOOD

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Fathers, in the West, have long been receiving a terrible backlash from society because of the absenteeism and/or abandonment that their now grown-up children have experienced during their childhood. The resentment and rebellion this resulted to has caused discord not only in the family, but in society and among generations as well. So if you would notice, Mother's Day is a much more celebrated event compared to Father's Day.

But what is it about fatherhood that has been missing? What is the role of a man in his family? Do present-day fathers know about their God-given role?

The first role that I believe we would agree in is that fathers are the primary breadwinners of the family. This has been the long-held traditional view and expectation across cultures. The root of this may have been well taken from Scripture such as 1 Timothy 5:8, which says, "But those who won't care for their own relatives, especially those living in the same household, have denied what we believe. Such people are worse than unbelievers." Thus, a man, or the man, should provide for his family. The responsibility of providing falls squarely on the shoulders of the father. And that has long since generated pressure to every man of the house. For if he fails in this, he would be seen and regarded as a lesser man. And this has pushed many fathers

to be career-driven, often to the neglect of their other duties.

Provision for their family's financial, material, and educational needs and comfort has been many a father's goal. This is not bad in itself. But many, if not most fathers, stop here. If this is all there is to aspire for, then they all miss out on what the Bible says about the other, if not more important role of a father - to love his children and bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.

In Genesis 37:3-4, Jacob's (Israel) partiality toward his sons may have been used by God, in His sovereignty, to save the clan. But the Bible clearly says that we should not be partial in loving others: we should not show favoritism (James 2:8-9).

In Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21, fathers are admonished not to provoke their children to anger nor aggravate them, but rather, "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord". And in 1 Samuel 3:13, a stern warning and example given to Eli, the high priest, when he failed to train and discipline his sons who were priests themselves.

For so many reasons, most fathers have neglected this essential role of loving, disciplining, and disciplining their children and relegated it to others. And the world, not only their family, has suffered for it.

There are many researches that have shown that in parenting, the mother's role is essential, but is not complete in itself. The father - the father that loves, teaches, and disciplines in love - IS needed and integral to the growth of a child. So this is the challenge to fathers today - **especially** to Christian fathers.

Many people today have not known the love of a father, so they cannot relate or they entirely reject the concept of God as "Father". This is a call for every Christian father - to take on the responsibility of showing who and what the Father is through their own lives, especially through their love for their children, so that the world may know about God and believe in Him. God is a redemptive God that He wants to redeem fatherhood to its once esteemed position in the family and society. And this redemption would eventually direct people back to Him, the loving Father this world needs.

As we celebrate Father's Day today, let us pray for the fathers in GCF South Metro that God would protect them, guide them, strengthen them, and empower to be the fathers that their family and this world needs them to be. For the sake of the world and for the glory of God, our Great Father, whom we also celebrate today! ✨