

# Godly Marriage and Family Life

**Anchor command.** “If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” *1 Timothy 5:8*

**Anchor story.** A young widow, Ruth, finds a loving family. *Ruth 1:16-17; 2:3-12.*

**Anchor verse.** “A man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” *Genesis 2:24*

**Learning goal.** Know accurately what God has revealed concerning marriage and family life.

**Growth goal.** Care lovingly for one’s spouse and children, above all else.

**Skill goal.** Counsel effectively couples who are struggling with their marriage or have other family problems.

**Outcome goal.** The believers enjoy healthy, happy and godly family life.

Lord, 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.

## Basic Study

### Learn from the story of Ruth.

- Naomi, her husband and two sons went to the pagan land of Moab where her husband and both sons died, leaving two young Moabite widows. The famine passed, and Naomi started back to Israel. Her two daughters-in-law started to follow her, but she told them to stay. Consider Ruth’s devotion in her reply to Naomi. *Ruth 1:16-17.*
- How did the wealthy man mobilize show his compassion for the poor foreigner? *2: 3-9*
- What had Boaz heard about Ruth that moved him to show her compassion? *2:10-11*
- In whom had Ruth come to seek refuge, besides Boaz? *2:12*
- Note: Ruth became the great grandmother of King David, and therefore an ancestor of Jesus Christ.



*God choose a faithful young widow from Moab to become an ancestor of his Messiah, Jesus.*

**During the week** you and your coworkers should visit any believers who are having family problems. Pray with them and counsel them. Help them to forgive grievances, just as Christ has forgiven them. *Ephesians 4:32*

**During worship**

- Tell how God gave the poor, young widow Ruth his loving family.
- Ask the same questions as above, and encourage the believers to discuss the answers.
- Ask the children to present what they have prepared
- Memorize Ephesians 5:21.

**Advanced Study**

**1. More instruction about marriage and family**

- 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.
- **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.

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 the children 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 the children 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 angrily, and do not frustrate them with rules that are hard 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 family worship** times that include their children. Encourage both fathers and mothers to participate.
- Visit families that are having problems and **counsel** them about how to strengthen their families. Here are some guidelines:

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

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

Encourage the leaders of the congregation to take ample time to **pray with their own families**. Satan often tempts Christian workers to neglect their families in order to weaken their families and destroy their ministries.

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

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

## 3. 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.

## 4. Additional, optional activities to do during worship.

- **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 in this study.
- Read Paul's counsel for Christian families from **Ephesians 5:21 to 6:4**, and **explain** the following:

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.

- 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.
- To introduce the **Lord's Supper**, you might 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.