

# *For the Love of the Family Ministries*

*Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family*

*Faithfulness In God's House*

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Several years ago Kim and I started For The Love Of The Family because we were concerned about the number of children that were growing up in Christian homes and not going on to live for God. Depending on whose statistics you look at and how they were taken 60 to 80 percent of all children who grow up in an Independent-Fundamental Baptist Church do not go on to serve the Lord after the age of 18. A high percentage of Bible College graduates also do not go on to serve God after they graduate as well. The number of Christian marriages that end in divorce is around 50 percent. Folks that is utter failure. There are many reasons for this. The most important reason is the individual does not have a real, intimate, personal passionate relationship with God. Therefore, when the devil puts outside pressure on the person's life by circumstances, people etc. the Christian has no power at the point of spiritual impact. They are not a submitted person, James 4:7 and they do not turn things over to God at the point of impact; therefore, they live the Christian life in their own power. Satan does this to control the mind, emotions, and will. The will of course is where we make our decisions. Therefore, the Christian makes decisions based on how they feel rather than what God says. Nothing but disaster happens from that type of decision making. **Proverbs 13:13, "Whoso despiseth the word (does not give proper attention to) shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded."**

**The Christian life is all about making right choices. One of those choices is to find a good Bible teaching church and be faithful in my attendance.** I understand that is becoming harder and harder to do. We receive many inquiries here at For The Love Of The Family from people concerned about their church.

First of all, let me say I am a supporter of the local church. I believe God's program today on this earth is a spiritually sound, doctrinally sound, spirit-controlled leadership, Bible teaching and preaching, and practically sound independent-fundamental Baptist Church. However, there is a wide swath today in independent-fundamental Baptist churches. Folks, let's just be honest, many independent-fundamental Baptist churches today are not a good place for a spiritual person to try to rear their family spiritually.

I am in the ministry because God called me to help people get saved, learn, grow, and have an intimate, personal, and passionate relationship with God. To have a real relationship with Him and to not have a mechanical one that leads to destruction.

All around us today we see spiritual destruction of the lives of people in the church. Honestly, some of that comes because of bad spiritual leadership in the church and some by disobedience to God and His Word by people in the church.

**Let me say, while I am a supporter of the local church, I am not a supporter of a church that has sin in their leadership or in their assembly that the church is not willing to deal with.** The apostle Paul addressed the issue to the Corinthian church of their unwillingness to deal with their sin. They were a carnal church led by their emotions and their lusts. Romans 6:12-13, ***Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*** *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield (submit)** yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.* I would suggest reading and meditating on Romans 6:11-19. Ladies and gentlemen sometimes in a church sin has to be dealt with. Sometimes sin has to be dealt with in the leadership of a church. God will not bless a church that does not do so. It will affect the lives of the people negatively if it is not dealt with.

I have heard and seen horror stories of churches out of control and lives being destroyed because of un dealt with sin of the leaders of the church and the people in the pew. When this happens we get a local church that has all the sins of Ephesians 4:31, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.* The church becomes a place of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour (public quarreling), evil speaking, and malice (a desire to hurt). There is nothing godly about any of that and it sure will hurt the family that wants to live for God. The church becomes a place of anger and fighting, a literal "mad" house.

Dr. David Cloud in his excellent article, *I Am Not Your Pastor* says, **"In some cases there might not be a sound, spiritually-healthy, Bible-believing church within commuting distance, and I would not expect God's people to attend a church that would undermine their faith or hinder their spiritual lives or that of their children.**

But my recommendation in such cases has always been to find a way either to help start a good church in that particular location or to move to a place where there is one. It has been said that "where there is a will there is a way," and that is usually true. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). When God tells us to do something, He provides a way, and the church is God's program for this age. It is mentioned

more than 100 times in Scripture. Most of the New Testament is written to churches. We are commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25) and to obey them that have the rule over us (Heb. 13:17). Those Scriptures take for granted that we will be in a church. The first believers continued steadfastly in the doctrine, fellowship, prayers, and breaking of bread in the church (Acts 2:42). Paul commended Phebe to the church at Rome, and reminded them that she was a servant of the church at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1). That is the example that is put before us in Scripture. Folks, sheep need sheepfolds and shepherds, and that is what God has provided in the church.”

Folks, God wants your church experience to be one where you can grow spiritually, learn, worship with traditional godly music, where people are treated with kindness, Ephesians 4:32. It must be a place that preaches God’s Word from the correct Bible in the power of the Holy Spirit, is concerned about the lost and tries to win them to Christ, and wants to disciple and help people. It is a place that teaches people how to deal with their sin and how to help families have a real, intimate, personal, passionate relationship with God. It should be a place that is a family that cares about each other not an entertainment center. Families that are controlled by the Spirit learn how to deal with problems in the church in a right manner and in their personal lives. All families need to learn how to deal with problems rather than fight over them.

When a church is doctrinally unsound, practically unsound, (a church led by programs that are totally appealing to the flesh, Romans 6:11-19) or there are problems that are so far out of control and sin is in the camp of a local church and no one wishes to deal with it then it is time to go on to another church or help start a church in the area you live in, or move to an area where there is a church that will be what is needed in your life. Loyalty to a sinful church demanded by pastors who are “lords” is not Biblical and it is not Christ honoring. Your family deserves more than that for God. In fact, the spiritual health of your family depends on it. Always make sure if you do leave the church it is for the right Biblical reasons, done in the right way, led by God, for the godly peace of your family, and a Biblically correct worship opportunity for your family.

**Make sure you are attending a good sound Bible preaching and teaching church. I cannot emphasize this enough. There is nothing more important than your relationship with God and your family’s relationship with God. The local church plays a big part of that so it must be the “right church.”** Make sure the emphasis of the church is upon growing spiritually, winning the lost, and not activity orientation. Do not look for a church because of activities it has for children. Look for a church that has emphasis on teaching spiritual truth to you and your family. You want your children to grow up to have a servant’s heart. They need to be taught that by you and the local church. Look for a church that has the ministry of the Word of God as their primary emphasis. Look for a church that encourages godliness and holy living. Look for a church that does not have emphasis on ungodly music (music that appeals to the flesh rather than the spirit) such as contemporary Christian music, Southern gospel music, and an overall emphasis on music instead of God's Word, Romans 6:11-19, Ephesians 5:19-21. Many churches worship youth groups and music rather than God. (By the way, that is idolatry). Look for a church that has an emphasis on hymn music.

When you find a good church or help start a good church be faithful to the church services. **Nothing is any more harmful to the family than to be unfaithful in your local church attendance.**

As far as church services are concerned, in my counseling I ask people early on about their church attendance. I have seen way too much missing of church services and a pattern of unfaithfulness in the lives of many of God's people who are in destruction mode, Proverbs 13:13. I strongly believe and the Bible teaches it is sin to miss the services on the Lord's Day because I am traveling or for anything other than I am sick. **I do not travel on Sundays where I miss the Lord's house and I encourage our church folk not to do so. I encourage our folks to understand they are to be in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day.** Years ago, I had an evangelist come by and ask if he could put his travel camper at our church for a couple of days. I said, "Sure". He arrived on Thursday and I asked about the Lord's Day if he was going to be with us? He said no, "He had to travel on Sunday." I ask where he was going and what was the reason for travel on Sunday. He did not have to be to his destination until the following Wednesday and it was only a 5 hour trip. I recognized this was not a person who had the proper understanding of the Lord's Day and the Lord's house. **He ended up in disaster in his life and not effective in the ministry because he is no longer in the ministry.**

As a Christian I need to understand my attendance at our local church is important as I am commanded in Hebrews 10:25, to "**exhort one another**". I cannot exhort one another if I am not in church. It is an extremely poor testimony to young believers and others. I believe if I am going to be away I need to go to church on both services on the Lord's Day in a sound, independent, fundamental, Baptist Church. I need to plan in advance to find the right church and know the times of the services.

I need to take into consideration my churches activities if I am making travel plans to be away from my church. If it is an important day for my church then maybe I need to think about rescheduling or scheduling my activity at another time. If I have a responsibility at my church I do not give it away to someone else and then miss important services at our church. Sadly, what is going to happen is some of the people who are missing services are going to have gaps in their learning and it will come back to bite them and their family. Satan will make sure of that. It will affect their life negatively and seriously.

**Faithful attendance in God's house is not just about me, it is about others as well.** My testimony in this speaks loudly. I see it as basic spiritual immaturity if someone does not or cannot understand that. It is a spiritual level that needs to be corrected in many churches. There are believers in many churches who have sadly never have been totally faithful in their life. It has hurt them badly and their family badly.

When I look for leadership in our church faithfulness to all services is a factor of what I am looking for in the spiritual maturity of the individual. The question I always ask those considering spiritual leadership is does your job take you away from the church services, or do you see other activities more important than your local church services? If so, they do not understand the Bible's teaching on this subject. If I am a member of a local

church, I am to be in attendance, support it, and be faithful to it. Hebrews 10:25-27, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For **if we sin willfully** after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of **judgment** and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Notice it says "**willful sin**" so missing God's house is "**willful sin**". Many people's lives have been judged by God, because by "**willful sin**" I leave God no other option but to judge my life. Then horrible things happen, with my children, marriage because of my "**willful sin**" etc.

Is your church having any special classes you have signed up for? I encourage people not to sign up for classes and then miss them. It is a basic lack of understanding that these are important classes not casual.

Many people who have family who ask them to come visit think they drop everything in their local church to accommodate that issue. It is like they lose all spiritual sense if family calls. I had one lady in our church when family came to visit her she stayed home from church. Problem was that someone came to visit every other week! **Bring your family with you to church! How in the world will you see them get saved by staying home with them?! Also, if they do not want to come to church let them know you will be back after church is over, but they are welcome to come with you.** In this lady's life her children are a disaster and their lives have been destroyed. **Then we have the folks who always have to go visit family. When they do they do not go to church! It is sin and it is spiritually dumb! You are teaching your children that vacations and family mean I forget about God for this time. It is unfaithfulness and it is sin!** Saying that, I did not say, do not go see my family, but I would encourage people to work around the Lord's Day if possible. If not possible, then be faithful to attend both services in a sound independent-fundamental Baptist Church. If it is a habit that a person is gone a lot then they should not be in leadership in their local church, because they spiritually do not understand the Bible's "**exhortation**" and **command** on this. They do not think about the fact that someone has to do the jobs they are doing when they are gone and it is an unnecessary burden upon others in the local church. Also, it is the wrong testimony to others in the church and most of all to their children.

Obviously, there are emergencies where a person must be out, but I have found that people who are loose with their attendance on the Lord's Day and the church services always have spiritual issues and generally their family and children suffer and later do not serve God. (They are emotion led rather than Bible led.)

Years ago, I had a man in our church who worked for an automaker. The automaker paid double time for working on the Lord's Day. He did so many times for the money. He had two children who grew up to be disasters and he spent that money many times over getting them out of the jams they were in. At the end of his life suffering from a debilitating disease he was wheel chair bound. He told me, "Pastor I wish I had never done that by working on Sunday, I lost my children and look at their lives!" Folks the last six months of his life he sat in a wheel chair looking out a window crying over his family.

All his children were interested in was how much money they would get when he died! He had raised selfish children. They did not even put a grave stone on his grave for many years.

In another life I was the Publisher of a newspaper, a top executive in our company and had several people working for me. I made sure our employees understood that we do not work here on Sunday. I also made sure my bosses knew I would not work on Sunday or Wednesday evening and I did not travel on Sunday because the airline flights were cheaper. It was clear to all involved.

I see it also, that I do not take a job where I work on the Lord's Day. A Pastor friend used to say, "There are plenty of other people who can do that job and God can provide for you one that you do not have to be out of God's house". I agree.

When I got saved I played professional baseball in the San Francisco Giants organization. I was a pitcher. I knew I could not continue to play because they play baseball on Sunday. The Bible commands me to be in God's house on Sunday. I am to be faithful, worship, and learn what God has for my life on Sunday. I know that many people in a sports oriented world don't want their children to miss out on activities of this nature. Let me tell you that being unfaithful to God's house to play sports shows lack of spiritual understanding and will lead to a stolen heart. I did not say not to play sports, but I have to have the right priorities in my life. When sports become a god spiritual disaster takes place.

Don't look at other people at your church and base your decisions on what they have done or do. That is not a correct way to run my life. Just because others make poor decisions that does not mean I should or even compare myself to them. I want my children to go up and walk with God. They will not if willful sin is in my life.

The Christians need to be exhorted to be in God's house and not miss it. It must be a priority in a person's life and it will be an encouragement to their life. God blesses faithfulness; He does not bless slothfulness, I Corinthians 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Take inventory of your life; are you a faithful Christian in God's house? Your children's lives and your marriage may depend on it.

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