

Introduction

In 2018 we hosted the first D6 Malaysia with the theme, “Generational Discipleship”.
Dr Ron Hunter Jr, the founder of D6 was the keynote speaker.

Illustration: Our practice of sending our children for various classes where parents function as “transporters” and “droppers”.

Can we carry this same practice for the Sunday School and Youth Ministry. Is this okay?

I. What Scriptures say about faith training

A) Deuteronomy 6:1-9

1. Moses was tasked to teach God’s commandments to the generations, “you, your children and their children after them.” (v.1)

We note the three “so that”, outcome of obedience: (vv 2-3)

v.2 So that

So that

v.3 So that

2. Moses reminded them of two things (vv. 4-9)

2.1. *Their commitment towards God* (vv 4-5)

a. God is “One”. No other gods.

b. They too must be singularly-focused.

2.2. *Their commitment towards God’s commandments* (vv 6-9)

a. The first generation, keep God’s commandments in their hearts.

b. They then impress God’s word to their children through 3 senses

i) *The sense of hearing.*

ii) *The sense of touch* (the phylacteries)

iii) *The sense of sight* (the mezuzah)

B) Other Scriptures

1) **Proverbs 22: 6** - Faith training begins when the person is yet a child.

2) **2 Timothy 3:14-15, 2 Timothy 1:5**

Timothy became acquainted with God’s commands from childhood, through the impact and influence of his grandmother and his mother.

II). Faith Training. Whose responsibility?

A. Has the church succeeded?

1. Church invested in Sunday School and Youth programmes. But how successful?

2. Mark Holman, “Building Faith at Home”, raised this question, “What are we accomplishing at church?”
“Although this is hard to admit, we need to be honest. The time, resources and energy we’ve devoted to programmes over the past 40 years hasn’t instilled faith-at-home living. Unfortunately, this focus might have even caused some of the problems we face today.”

3. Ron Hunter, “Don’t repeat our mistakes.”

B) What then is the way forward?

1) Lessons from History: Parents’ role in faith training

Hear what the Church Reformer, Martin Luther said in his sermon, “The Estate of Marriage”:

Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal.”

Susannah Wesley, the mother of John Wesley echoed similar thoughts. “She wrote, “*There is nothing I now desire to live for, but to do some small service to my children; that, as I have brought them into the world, I may, if it please God, be an instrument of doing good to their souls.*”

2 Most Valuable Partners: Home and Church

Church and home are to establish a partnership.

Parents can no longer be transporters and droppers. The church needs to consider that the home is their Most Valuable Partner! So the role of the church is to help fathers and mothers carry out their God-ordained roles. The church cannot usurp this role. And the home cannot relinquish this role.

Illustration: Larry Fowler, author of “*Rock-Solid Kids*”, shared about an experience from Kazakhstan.

Larry, “Don’t you have Sunday School for the children?”

The people, “The parents teach their children at home!”

3 How to establish this Partnership?

a. On the home side, once again capture the Biblical mandate. The home must see that the Great Commission begins at home. The salvation of their children is of primary concern. The children are also the primary disciples. Rob Rienow’s book, “*Limited Church: Unlimited Kingdom. Uniting Church and Family in the Great Commission*” helps the home capture this vision and mission.

b. As for the church it needs to re-look how it does *Family Ministry*.

i) Move away from “silo mentality

ii) Family Ministry is at the heart of every ministry.

Conclusion

Faith Training: Whose responsibility?

In order for the home to carry out its responsibility well, it needs the equipping ministry of the church.

So, the church needs to partner the home in the area of faith training.

George Barna, “*Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*” said, “*The local church should be an intimate and valuable partner in the efforts to raise the coming generation of Christ followers and church leaders, but it is the parents whom God will hold primarily accountable for the spiritual maturation of their children.*”

One baby step - Do a prayer of blessing

“Then all the people left, each for their own home, and David returned home to bless his family.” (I Chronicles 16:46). Like David let us bless our family using, “Aaron’s Blessing”

²⁴*The Lord bless you and keep you;*

²⁵*the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;*

²⁶*the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.* (Numbers 6:24-26)

For Discussion

1. Share about the outcome(s) should parents continue to be just transporters in relation to their children Sunday School or Youth Ministry.
2. What insights do you gain from Luther’s and Susannah’s quote?
3. In what areas do you think the church can equip parents or the home to carry out their God-ordained responsibility of faith-at-home training.