

Family Discipleship Challenge:

Background:

Hope is a good thing. It is a powerful thing. We are exhorted to “hope in the LORD” throughout scripture but modern English has watered this word down to a vague, wishful, fingers crossed type of meaning instead of a Rock-solid dependence and action based on the knowledge and character of the LORD we serve. When we say we hope things work out that is most often a way to pass the buck- to say we have no say so in the things that are to come – that we are at the mercy of fate, or karma, or the universe, other people, or even God. We use hope to reflect that we want a certain outcome but we don’t actually expect it and are not committed to following God so that the goal will come about.

When children come into our lives through whatever means and in whatever relationship – we often say I hope they grow up to be successful. I hope they grow up to be happy. I hope they grow up and get a good job. **I HOPE THEY GROW UP AND BECOME A CHRISTIAN.**

We see those hopes but do we feel responsible for equipping the children to reach those aspirations? We get them schooling so they can get a job. We teach them to take care of themselves so they will have the ability to leave home and participate in society. We teach them to work on a team or play a sport so they can socialize. We pay tons of money to provide sports opportunities, education and arts opportunities. We buy food and equipment and tutoring and clothes.... So that the “hopes” for their success can be realized. But studies show that by and large, parents’ “hopes” for being followers of Jesus and “hopes” for being a vital part of a faith community receive very little INTENTIONAL focus. It’s as though we have no influence or control over those outcomes.

Reason:

While we all know that God is sovereign over all things and that the Holy Spirit is necessary for a child (or adult) to be born again – we can see over and over that God recognized that the family and parents specifically have tremendous impact and responsibility to influence these outcomes. The point of this challenge is to acknowledge the need to be INTENTIONAL and not just HOPEFUL when it comes to the spiritual development of the children in our community and most specifically our families.

Challenge Guidelines:

1. Adults in the Home: Start with the Family Discipleship Plan. Reflect on what is going well spiritually for your children and their areas of struggle. Take a moment to dream about adulthood and then break it down into smaller childhood goals that will help make those adulthood goals more likely. List ideas and resources that you have or need.

2. Use the other 2 planning sheets to set goals for yourself and your children. Choose the plan sheet that is best for the ages and understanding level of your children. Have a one on one date night with your children and give them individual time to talk over being a follower of Christ as they grow and help them set at least 1 goal.
3. For children who are not yet believers there is a separate plan sheet to include them in the process. Meet with them and share with them how much Jesus loves them and write a prayer together that God will show them when it is the right time to become a disciple.
4. After setting the goals, post them on the refrigerator or keep them with your Bible as you have family devotions or personal quiet time. Reflect on them at least once a month and plan celebrations for the times you see spiritual fruit growing in your family!
5. NOTE: Samples of complete plan ideas as well as blank plan sheets for each level are available on the Kids Ministry News Blog on the church website:
www.calvaryor.org

Celebrations:

When you see spiritual fruit growing in your family, plan an intentional celebration.

1. Make a list/poster of thanksgiving to God. List actions and attitudes that you notice that reflect a love for God and His people.
2. Choose a specific goal that has been made, and honor the family member with a new Bible, a Bible study book, notebook, or art project to remember it.
3. Have the person who meets their goal plan a special family time, game night, hike, or trip to the park. Do a family devotion and prayer time as a part of this celebration.
4. Take a family trip to a worship concert.
5. Decide on a way to bless others and serve as way to continue growth towards becoming a disciple of Christ.