

FATHER'S DAY – A TIME OF REFLECTION

Happy Father's Day and congratulations to all the fathers in St Piran's Anglican Church, Jos.

A Father can be defined in many ways and the Bible shows him as the head of the family, the ruler, and provider, and as he who trains his children in the fear of God.

In the first century, families were presided over by fathers who could do whatever they pleased in their homes. Rome had a law called *patria potestas*, which meant “the father's power.” Men who were Roman citizens were given absolute rights over their families. By law, the children and the wife were regarded as the patriarch's personal property, and he could do with them what he wished.

Today we know better. We are not at liberty to do what pleases us. We are to do what pleases the Lord in our families. Being a father is a privilege from God and a responsibility that we must give an account before God.

Father's Day provide excellent opportunities to remember important principles and events, repent of our personal failures, recalibrate toward the good and the right, and resolve to persevere toward righteousness. Father's Day should remind us that God-fearing parents of all ages have been concerned that their children would walk in the truth. This is God's desire and design for fathers after His own heart.

1. A godly father does well to pay attention to his own example, knowing that his children and others are watching and may follow his lead, 1Tim 4:6. Every father is preaching with his life as much as he is with his words. Do not confuse your children by living a double standard life or life of syncretism. Scripture teaches that who we are and how we live is like a “letter from God.” Our kids read that letter, every day, 2Cor 3:2-3. If we are committed to God, they too will learn commitment.
2. A godly father is his children's “First Teacher” (Proverbs 22:6). It is your responsibility to teach and train up your children in the way of the Lord and His word (Deut 6:7-9). It is NOT the school, not the Church, not the government, but you—and that means dad.

3. A godly father disciplines his children so as to correct them – but in love (Prov 13:24). The father who loves his children, Scripture says, “is careful to discipline them.” This is also about proactive leadership in our homes. When a father withholds discipline from children in the name of love, he breeds troubles for himself and destruction for the children.
4. A godly father never gives up on his kids. The story of “The Prodigal Son” (Luke 15:20-24) is the story of a father who never gives up hope and is ready to receive his child back with open arms. We can discipline, we can hold accountable, but we must never give up.
5. A godly father provides for his family (I Tim. 5:8). For those of you struggling to find work, don’t get down on yourself. This idea is more about your heart and desire. Being a father who provides covers more than rent and food. As fathers, it’s our responsibility to make sure our family’s needs are addressed across the board. Be encouraged and look for ways to give to your family even when it is hard to financially.
6. A godly father lives intentionally according to principles derived from God’s Word. He trusts and obeys the Scripture as the written record of God’s revelation. He confidently rests upon the Bible for all matters of truth, recognizing that the eternal and all-knowing God has documented the foundation of everything we need to know for this life and the life to come.
7. A godly father spends time with his family and children particularly – Deut 6:6-9.. The Scriptures are clear that fathers must engage their children in the kind of deep, heart-to-heart conversations that impart more than facts, but teach wisdom. Schedule some regular “conversational walks” with your children, one on one. Therefore family time matters.
8. A godly father loves and shows compassion to his children. A father has compassion for his children. Psalm 103:13 points out, “so the LORD has compassion.” He is careful not to provoke them to anger as that can be disastrous, Eph 6:4. He draws them to himself and raises them to be young people of faith.
9. A godly father prays for his children (1 Chronicles 29:19). King David prayed for his son, Solomon. Children who know without

any doubt that their dads pray for them every day own a deep sense of love and security. Pray for each of your children – presenting to God their different needs, weaknesses, strengths, etc.

The state of our churches, homes or society is to a large extent, a reflection of how fathers are performing their duties. The failure of Christian parents in this regard has affected the church and society in no small way. Reflect on your own performance! Examine yourself!

We live in a crazy, mixed-up world that is often anything but godly. Over the past few decades we have seen a disturbing decline of a father's influence in the home. Christian fathers need to be wise to the fact that our secular culture is trying to influence us and our children to reject God and live 'any how' – doing whatever seems good to us. This ungodly, sinful desire is nothing new, but we need to discern these powerful influences and reject them in totality.

Raising godly children remains the burden and responsibility of all parents, especially fathers, as the Scripture says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"

Remember, being a father is a great responsibility. It takes more than just bringing children into the world. Being a father is a lifetime commitment and responsibility. Your children will still need you even when they are grown up and gone from you. You cannot be of genuine help to them in different matters of life if you are not a godly father. A godly father is one who is connected to our heavenly Father. As a father, your influence can powerfully affect others. But you must also note that your own performance is no guarantee of your child's faith, neither your failures a guarantee of your child's spiritual failures. Note how godly Hezekiah was father to a vile Manasseh (who later repented), just as wicked Amon was father to righteous Josiah. However be assured that anything done by faith and in obedience to God shall be rewarded by God. So when you have faithfully fulfilled your responsibilities, leave the ultimate results to our gracious God who will always do that which is pleasing in His sight.

May God Almighty give you good health, sound mind and keep you in safety that you will enjoy the fruit of your labor.

Happy Father's Day

~~ Vicar

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