

## Family Trials During Troubling Times

By now most people have either adapted to this isolating thing, slowly losing your patience with everyone around you, or you have gone crazy and given into depression. Hopefully no one is in that last group just mentioned but these are troubling times for many families. We want to diagnosis some of the reasons for family problems, and what we can do to solve or at least deal.

One big problem is the uncertainty of the situation. Staying at home or working from home doesn't sound to bad but after it loses its newness it becomes old. We don't know how long this will last. Will life return back to normal at the first of May, or June, or July? At this point no one knows when we will go back to work, school, worship, or any other social activity. That can stress us out because we like knowing what tomorrow will bring.

Another problem is the financial burden this is places on many homes. Unemployment checks are not the same as one regularly earns on the job. Most of our bills will still be the same. The number one cause of divorce is financial problems and this could cause more divorces.

Change in our routines also creates stress for us. Just about everyone has a routine they developed over time. Our routines work for us and suddenly we don't have to get up or go to bed at the same time. We don't have to drive to work or school. We don't even have to get out of our PJ's! The fact is most of us need a routine in order to stay healthy and happy.

Too much family time is another problem. Husbands and wives being around each other 24/7 can be hard because we can get on each other's nerves. Then throw in the children with homeschool. Many parents are finding their child's teacher is right about their child!

Too much time on our hands leads to boredom which leads to grumbling, and complaining. I can also throw in people confined to their homes and social isolation.

All of the above can create problems in the home.

What are some things we can and should do?

Replace uncertainty with trust and faith in God. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:33-34) Take the trials of this life one day at a time. Israel was sent into captivity for seventy years, Jeremiah 29.10. Some trials lasted a short time period. In 2 Kings 6, Samaria was under siege by Syria. Things were really bad as they ate dove dung and even ate their children. The day after the siege was over food was plentiful, 2 Kings 7. None of us knows what will happen tomorrow. We have to trust in God as Matthew 6 tells us, God will provide what we shall need. "Therefore, do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." Matthew 6:31-32)

Trusting in God will take care of many of family problems. Families are facing financial problems as they have bills to pay and children to feed. But Matthew 6.31-32 tells us to trust in God. Christians have a spiritual family to help them. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10) Our physical families can help each other. "But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God." (1 Timothy 5:4)

A new routine can be developed. You can develop a routine of reading your Bible, calling others to see how they are doing. We have to adapt to our situation in life. In Philippians 1 Paul speaks of his station in life. He had been in prison and was released for a short while. He was arrested again and put in prison. But he learned to be content in life. "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:" (Philippians 4:11)

Use this time to bring your family closer together. Many houses are not "homes" but places where people sleep. Husbands and wives are busy with their jobs and other endeavors. Children are sent to school then extra-circular activities. Family time doesn't exist in these homes. Therefore, change the pattern and communicate. Go for walks together, play together, eat together, pray together. Quality and quantity of time tend to have a correlation.

Use whatever extra time you have wisely. Again, I will mention study your Bible, pray, and do those things you were too busy to do earlier.

Finally, give each other some personal space. I spend time listening to other preachers, doing yard work, walking by myself or family, and getting out of the house.

These are trying times for some families but for many it can be a time of togetherness and personal growth. -- Dennis Tucker