

Here’s a challenge to you. Have “the talk” with God in your prayers, and have “the talk” with your partner if there are two of you parenting. Have “the talk” soon, before it becomes an issue, so that you have already decided how you will respond. Then you will be ready one day for this:

“Mum, can I go to a sleepover on Saturday night at my friend’s house? Can you pick me up on Sunday at 11?”

“Would little like to join the same football team as my ? They play on Sunday mornings.”

“Dad, I’m going to get a weekend job. I’ll be working on Sundays all day.”

So, what’s the talk?

The talk is to decide as a family where your priorities lie regarding Sunday worship, and how you will find your unique path through with the Lord, and how you will explain that to your children. What choices you allow them to make, and what things are non-negotiable.

This is not to lay down laws for you or to make you feel guilty. Some of you will already have encountered this issue and made your own decisions. But others have found themselves in this position by accident: it wasn’t a decision they made, but they got caught out by the suggestion of a friend or a plea from their child. And having said yes once or twice without really thinking it through, they were stuck.

My challenge to you is to “have the talk” with God and with your family, so that you are in control under the Lord’s guidance, and make a decision that’s right between you and God. Don’t copy what everyone else does without thinking it through.

I’m saying this from experience. We nearly slid into things by mistake as we never “had the talk” in our family. It was only the fact that we were both serving in the church that meant we said no to things. I can’t claim any moral high ground.

If you decide to steer away from Sunday clubs and parties, I believe that God will honour your decision. You really CAN be the parent who says their child can join the party late after church. You CAN be the parent who arrives unpopular and bright and early Sunday morning to pick up the child from the sleep over ready for church. You CAN be the parent whose child throws themselves on the ground in anger because you said “no” to something, for children don’t always know what’s best for them yet.

Those of us have experienced all these things are pleased to say that our children got over these incidents unscarred and do still love us! When we make these hard choices we are communicating to our children and to others that faith is important to our families. Worshipping God is a priority. Some of us found that friends began to consult us as to what time our child could make on a Sunday before booking the party!

Most of us have waived the rules occasionally, but it’s the weekly clubs and the phase of constant party invites on Sunday mornings that can disrupt the rhythm of going to church. Children can feel less settled in their Sunday groups and they don’t get the benefit of lessons carefully planned to build week by week. It can result in a sense of distance and dislocation for the whole family if parents and siblings are also kept away.

If you would like to pray or discuss any issues your family is facing, please ask Helen, me, Belinda, Diane, Jo, Shahne or Paul. We can tell you what we did, but also help you to pray through your unique situation. We haven’t got things sussed and we haven’t all followed the same path, but we trust in God’s faithfulness:

“Commit your way to the Lord; Trust in him and He will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn.” Psalm 47:3

Have the talk. It’s never too early or too late!

Anita

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