

Discipling at Home

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Mothers in the home have a God given responsibility and a vital role in discipling their children for Christ. The testimony of history bears this out in how men like Augustine and John Wesley spoke of their mothers. But we see this model of discipling in the home most powerfully laid out in scripture.

We think of Moses and the faith and courage of his mother in the development of a leader in Israel (Hebrews). The New Testament also

gives us a wonderful example of spiritual nurture at home. Paul reflects on the encouragement he finds in Timothy's faith (2 Timothy). Timothy's faith was nurtured in the home for it lived first in his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois.

The point that Paul is making is that their faith—the faith of his mother and grandmother—influenced the life and calling of Timothy, and presents to us the truth that the mother in the home is not just a cook and nursemaid, but a teacher and discipler of her children.

First, mothers should model Jesus before their children. Small children love to imitate their parents. Teenage children watch and analyse their parents. By reading her Bible openly, then, praying often in private and with the family, singing and worshiping as she

goes about her day, and participating in family worship or Bible study, the mother shows her children how to learn of Jesus and walk with him. She does this also by her regular attendance at church and in her response to the challenging ups and downs of life. By this she shows that her trust in God is a reality and not theory.

Second, mothers should teach Jesus to their children. At home, the mother has the opportunity to read the Bible to her children, to read good books to them, and to discuss with them the things taught in Scripture as they relate to the daily mundane chores and trials of life. For this a mother must dig deep into God's word for herself, she needs to be a theologian in her own right. This is how you can pass your faith on to your children as they toddle about at your feet all day or sit at your table each evening.

Mothers are best placed to have the earliest opportunity and foremost influence in the life of the child-to make God real to her children. How she speaks of the Lord and his Word will shape her children's understanding and will have eternal impact. Children respond to those whom they love and trust most, and will grow to love and trust whom you love and trust-the Lord Jesus.

"The Christian home should be the first place for sound theological discussion. The old concept in Africa that a child should be seen and not heard does not promote parent-child discussion. This must change. The family altar should not be merely a dead ritual, but spontaneous discussion should mark the family get-together. The discussion around the Word of God should then be followed with sincere prayer.

A child exposed to the Word of God at home is prepared for any atmosphere he will find in later life. If his questions are not dealt with at home he will take them somewhere else where he may not get a sympathetic, biblical-based answer. This is the challenge that African leaders and parents must face."

Dr. Byang H. Kato (1974)