

Are You Spending Enough Time With Your Family?

Today we are faced with many problems that are destroying family units everywhere. In a fast paced world we are always in a hurry to get to work to get to the beach, or to get home before the kids go to sleep. We never seem to have enough time in one day to do all that needs to be done.

There was a song written in the 70's called "The Cats and The Cradle," and in this song the lyrics talk about a man that was so involved outside the home that his own son never really spent quality time with him. The song goes on to say that the son looked up to his dad and he was going to be just like him. As the son grew up and went to college the father wanted to spend sometime with him when he got home, but his son was too busy. As the song goes on and his boy moved away he realized in the end that his boy turned out to be just like him (never having time to spend with his family). The moral to this story is that we may need to reprioritize our lives to put our families first.

You may ask, "Where do I start?" One thing that seems to separate the family is television. In this country we spend more time watching others live their lives and less time living our own. Why not turn the TV off and play monopoly, yahtzee, or cards. I know these are not the greatest suggestions, but the key is to make the family stronger. If you all have a common interest then do that. I have 2 teenage girls and a 4-year-old son. My oldest daughter loves horses and she enjoys riding and competing. My youngest daughter likes to write songs, and sing. She may not be the greatest singer in the world, but she enjoys it. My son is into DVD's and video games. All of them like to spend time with their parents. Up to a few years ago I did not even know them like I thought I did. In fact, I think it is safe to say that I knew very little at all. I was always consumed in my work to the point that I brought it home.

The thing that hurt me the most was when our family Doctor asked me if my son had all of his shots. I answered, "I don't know ask my wife." The look the Doctor gave me was one of disappointment. She told me that that was a common answer for a father to give. Why? I should know the answer to such a question, because I am his father. The answer to that is I am not interested in that, so it is not important. This selfish attitude had to change if I was going to have a relationship with anyone in my house.

The advice a friend gave me has helped me to grow with my family. He said to take 5 minutes a day and talk to your kids, and not as a group. Individually spend five minutes with each of them and talk to them about their interest not yours. You may find that they are far more important than the Super Bowl, or a day on the golf course. You may even earn their trust and loyalty. My oldest daughter told a friend on the phone once that it would hurt her parents too much to have sex before she was married and for that reason she has decided to wait. She has redirected her thinking only because she is receiving the companionship she needs at home. Teenagers that are sexually active in many cases are that way because they are substituting parental attention for sexual attention. If my folks won't pay attention to me the boy down the road will.

This is just one of the dangers of not spending more time with your family. How does it affect your spouse? Is he or she content with the time you have? If not, do you want them to look elsewhere? Of course not, but it can happen. Many marriages end in divorce, because the couples grow apart. They form their own lives without including the other. It is imperative that we take the time that we have today and spend it with your family, and make time tomorrow. If we do we will begin to repair any damage that is already done, and grow closer to our families in the future.

You may ask, "How do we separate work from home?" When you are at work and you know that you are not going to finish before you leave. Plan to just leave it there. It will be there tomorrow and so will the rest of it. Many employers don't staff their businesses correctly, because of those people who take their work home. If your load is too much tell your boss you need help. If your job is worth keeping your boss will understand that family comes first. Never let anything break up your home. Families united are stronger than divided. There is no mountain too high or river too wide for a strong family to tackle. Do whatever you have to do to keep your family together, and never regret the decisions you make to strengthen your family. It all pays off in the end.

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