

Discussion Questions on Parenting Issues

Thanks to all those who have submitted these questions. We undoubtedly will spend multiple evenings on the issues raised in each of them. As groups divide your time on dealing with the general ones *and* your target group. The questions on the families with young children was significantly smaller which may mean that most of the contributors are beyond the early stages of parenting. Yet these young parents need our support as they deal with the challenges of the young.

Each group is responsible to appoint a group leader whose task is to keep the discussion moving. His/her task is not to provide all the answers but encourage sufficient discussion time without getting stuck for half the evening on one issue.

It would be lovely if each group has a volunteer note-taker who could report the gist of the wisdom shared on our website for others to learn from. Pass on the notes to me and I will collate and prepare them for posting them on the website.

May God bless these evenings to strengthen us together in the beautiful and vital task of raising our next generation.

Pastor Arnoud

General questions:

1. What are the strategies to be on the same page in parenting?
2. How do balance nurturing, admonition, and discipline?
3. How do you foster a close and open relationship with your children, especially with pre-teens and keep it open during their teenager years?
4. What resources can you share that have helped you in parenting?
5. What is/are the roles of grandparents in the raising of children?
6. What do you think are the most dangerous things facing families in our age? What can we do together to strengthen ourselves how to deal with this?
7. Paul Trip said, "The most powerful thing that you can do for your children is to build in them an inescapable God-awareness." How can we build this God-awareness into our children? How do we turn mundane moments of daily life into God-awareness moments?
8. Many say that it is the mother's job to look after the children while husband has the out-of-the-house job, often having minimal time with his children at the end of the day. But what if the woman has various talents, it is good that she models this to her children especially in the gentler occupations like nurses, care givers, teachers, etc.? Is this where the grandparents have a task in helping to raise the family, if possible, like it appeared in former societies as well as in the Bible times?
9. If I as a parent feel uncomfortable to start a conversation about sexuality with my children, what or how is the best way to start this?
10. Would it be advisable that mothers talk to girls and fathers to boys when dealing with sexuality?
11. When should we talk to our children about homosexuality?
12. How do we promote a healthy self-regard and self-confidence in our teens without feeding pride, self-sufficiency, and an unbiblical view of themselves? The background of this question is the observation that a number of our older youth and young adults seem to have a low confidence in themselves and their abilities, even concluding that they are useless or not important to our community.

13. How much time should we spend one-on-one with each child? Is this to be daily or weekly or an occasional thing? Do anyone have tips and practical advice how to make this happen?
14. How do we give our children and teenagers a sense of belonging in our church settings and programs?
15. How do we foster a serving heart in our children?
16. Do we as families have an obligation to foster children when there is 'room' in the house and while there is such need in our community?
17. How do you teach your children to be respectful to others, while still teaching them to think critically, to feel free to speak their mind and question things?
18. Can *someone* still live a life of purity even though they are no more a virgin due to having had sexual relationships prior to marriage?
19. Do we elevate sexual sins above other sins, and if, is this wrong (i.e. confession of guilt mostly being done for breaking the 7th commandment)?
20. Do you think that by focusing heavily on the moral side of sex/sexuality we may unknowingly lack on encouraging the healthy/wholesome side of it? Do we focus too much on virginity rather than purity?

For families with young children (ages 1-5)

1. What are the best ways to handle a child's temper tantrums in public or private?
2. How do you deal with young children rubbing their genital areas for pleasure? Is this habit forming and should this be resisted or even punished?
3. How do you handle sense of 'depression' when all you seem to do is change nappies, do laundry, try to feed a kid that doesn't want eat, be on constant duty day and night and talk kids-talk, especially after having had an intellectually and socially stimulating job?

For families with school age children (ages 6-12)

1. What are effective ways to resolve a family conflict?
2. How do you handle backtalk or disrespectful talk and gestures?
3. What are the limits and guidelines on siblings teasing each other?
4. How do we deal with (habitual) lying? How do you encourage children to be truthful despite the consequences?
5. How do you know when it is a moment for a quiet talk in love or an expression of righteous anger?
6. How do we encourage a positive attitude toward learning whether at school or in home-schooling settings?
7. How much information do children need to know regarding sexual intimacy? How much is too much information too early?
8. How do we go about getting first time obedience from 5–10-year-olds when it comes across as if we have more leniency with the older ones? We are more willing to talk things out or let them do things in their own time when they are older one while we can't allow this when their younger siblings. What is the most effective method, rather than constant time out or extra jobs, or repeating over and over the same thing and parents getting frustrated? (It was surely easier getting respect from the older children when they were younger!)

For families with teenagers (ages 12-19)

1. Teenagers need to learn to make their own (correct) life choices. How do you guide them in these choices? When do you start letting them make their own choices? Should we allow them to make choices that we feel are not Biblical?
2. When a child has admitted they have done something wrong, should we still discipline (punish?) them?
3. How do deal with children that do not care about their presentation such as cleanliness, looks, social habits, immaturity?
4. Can older parents give some guidance how they dealt with discovery of masturbating teenagers?
5. What do you do with sibling rivalry? Is this good as it prepares our children for the real-life world?
6. Social media is highly addicting to teenagers, especially those lacking self-control. What strategies have worked for you, or can we talk about making workable strategies?
7. How do we Biblically guide our teenagers to have a healthy view about their own gender and the other gender?
8. How do we guide our teenager daughters and son to dress biblically and embracing their God given gender?
9. How do we guide our teenagers in career choices? Should there biblically be different choices for male and female?
10. How do we guide our teenagers about their music choices and the peer pressure around this issue?
11. When parenting teenagers, they value their freedom. So, if we have let something go in the past (in their mind we have said it's OK), is it fair to try and turn back the time, and change our mind, or get strict in an area we have in the past been slack? And how do you do this without making them feel undervalued and less of their own person?
12. Do we as a Christian community focus too much on purity from the girls' perspectives (i.e. purity rings or key necklaces) as if they are the 'gatekeeper' to a sexually pure relationship? Should we also lead our boys into a vow of chastity when they reach their teenage years?