

THE RELATIONSHIP OF A LEADER TO HIS FAMILY.

Scriptures: *Gen 18:19, Deut 6:7, Deut 11:19, Ps 78:4, Pro 22:6, Eph 6:4, Eph 5:25-33, Col 3:19,21, 1Tim 3:4,5, 2Tim 3:15, Tit 1:6.*

The leader's **first responsibility** in ministry is to his wife and family. If he is a failure as a husband and father, his ministry in the church will eventually fall to pieces.

In relationship with his wife, the leader's prime responsibility is **companionship**, sharing life and time together. He is a husband before he is a church leader and his success as a leader depends upon the relationship he has with his wife and children. **As a husband he needs to set aside quality time to share his life with his wife.** Communication! Communication and time! **The leader's wife has to know that she comes before the church and the ministry in her husband's life.** It is intolerable for a wife to feel and see that she is second or third in line behind other priorities. The leader's wife is an integral part of the ministry and very often will have insight, revelation, and judgment to assist her husband-leader without which he will soon get into difficulties. To my mind the husband-wife team is the leadership of the home and the church. It is very easy for the husband-leader to neglect his wife and family because of the ministry, and as a result the marriage and family suffer considerably. **Time management** is a key. Plan the week in advance, setting aside time on a regular basis for companionship, communication and sharing life together. If someone rings, as they probably will, sounding very much in need, at a time set aside for family, firmly, but kindly say that you are already engaged on important business, and suggest that they see someone else for help, or perhaps make an appointment for later in the week. An answer phone may be necessary to cover the time from 5-7p.m, so that the phone does not destroy the family time together around the meal table.

As a father the church leader is responsible for his own children and their upbringing before he is responsible for others and their children. The father is accountable to God to bring up his children "in the training and admonition of the Lord," *Eph 6:4*. It is essential to spend some time each day with young children and teenagers - maybe 5-7p.m. Also the father needs to plan his week so that he can be involved in hobbies, sports and other healthy activities together with his children. The interest of the father in the life of his family is necessary if they are to grow up as secure, confident, godly followers of Jesus Christ. To some large degree the credibility of the leader's ministry depends on the way his children turn out, *1Tim 3:5, Tit 1:6*. Eli's failure with his family has influenced me strongly in seeking to lead my family in the ways of God, *1Sam 2:29* See also *Gen 18:19*.

Further thoughts

A leader and his/her family's relationship with God is first priority.

A leader needs to get his/her priorities right and established, i.e. God first, family second, ministry third. These need to be remembered as they easily get lost with the pressure of ministry.

A husband must learn to be able to minister to his wife, bring out the best in her, establish her ministry, and be available to wife and family in times of crisis.

A wife must be able to share family problems without feeling she is destroying the ministry.

A leader must be available to his children so that they do not feel everybody else has access to the leader except them.

The wife and children are the leader's first sheep and they need to know it.

Family must have time to be family without being encroached upon by the ministry. This is only possible as God enables.

Home must be home and not unduly influenced by the church and ministry.

The office can be in the home but not dominating it.

Watch the number the nights out in ministry.

A contented and happy family is a good witness.

The family is a cell of the church, and leaders will find ministry to the family a training ground for the ministry to the church.

A wife needs to feel she is involved in the ministry and part of it.

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