

“The Big Lie”

Why the Church Should NOT Be Your Child’s Primary Spiritual Influence!

Introduction:

A majority of today’s churches are full of Children’s and Youth Ministries where parents view the church as the key to their child’s spiritual growth.

However statistics reveal that something’s not working!

- According to recent research somewhere between 70 and 88 percent of Christian teenagers are leaving the church by their second year in college. (Voddie Baucham, Family Driven Faith, 10)
- Over 80% of teens who claim to be “born-again” do not believe in the existence of absolute truth. (Baucham, 11)
- A recent Barna survey focused on finding out how teens beliefs differ from their parents found that:
 - 63% don’t believe Jesus is the Son of the one true God.
 - 58% believe all faiths teach equally valid truths.
 - 51% don’t believe Jesus rose from the dead.
 - 65% don’t believe Satan is a real entity.
 - 68% don’t believe the Holy Spirit is a real entity. (Steve Wright, Rethink: Is Student Ministry Working?, 34)

Why has the church become a place where parents expect their kids to gain the most spiritual understanding?

- Satan’s greatest tool is deception!
 - Many parents have been deceived into thinking that getting their child to church fulfills their responsibility to *Train up a child in the way he should go...* Proverbs 22:6
 - Many churches believe that bigger and better programs for kids will attract more families and give kids incentive to learn God’s Word.
 - These are both lies, and Satan has been able to weaken the strength of the home because of deceptions like these!
- The world system has pressured parents into finding ways to better manage their time!
 - Children’s church and teen groups have been seen by many as a free daycare.
 - Parents feel that they are able to focus more without their children as distractions.
 - Sunday school ministries (originally for kids only) took off in the mid-1800’s. Why? Many kids were left without parents who had time to teach

them God's Word as the Industrial Revolution was kicking into high gear!
(Let's just save time and leave them to the pros!)

Why should the church be the primary support for spiritual growth in the home?

- God has chosen parents to be the influences of their home!
 - Genesis 18:19; Proverbs 6:20-22
- In the letters written to the churches, Paul addressed the children as they attended the readings with their parents!
 - Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21
- A study was done by the Search Institute that surveyed Christian youth in grades 7-12 asking them "Who is the most significant religious influence in your life?" The results supported God's plan!
 1. Mom
 2. Dad
 3. Grandparent
 4. Another relative
 5. Siblings
 6. Friends
 7. Sr. Pastor
 8. Church Camp... #13. Youth Group Leader
- Today's statistics show about 80% of teens leaving the church after graduation. Is the church failing to equip children or is there another issue?
- The church has the least amount of spiritual influence on kids!
 - The time breakdown...
 - In 2003, a study of the activities of 6-12 years of age revealed that sleep, school, T.V., playing, personal care, and eating were the top 6 time-consuming activities.
 - Taking this study into consideration and figuring a week's time of activities...
 - Time away from home = 59 hrs.
 - School = 40 hrs.
 - Activities with friends = 16 hrs.
 - Time spent at church = 3 hrs.
 - Time at home = 109 hrs.
 - Sleeping = 56 hrs.
 - TV = 28 hrs.
 - Time spent alone = 10 hrs.
 - Family conversation = 3 hrs.
 - Misc. = 12 hrs.
 - The Church can have up to four hours of influence, but the parent has up to 40-50 hours per week!

- The real problem is revealed in the 2003 study of kids and the time spent on various activities. It was staggering to see that household conversations ranked 19th of 21!

Conclusion:

The local church is a vital part of families and their spiritual growth; however the local church is not to be the primary spiritual influence of the children in the home.

The local church exists to support the spiritual growth of the home. It helps ensure that families are equipped with the tools they need to grow in their walk with the Lord and are serving Him as part of the Body of Christ, both personally and as a family!