

The Believing Home as a Refuge

A Place of Protection

“I remember from my youthful years, how especially good it sometimes felt to come home.” A brother reminisced of the years of his battles in faith when growing up. Possibly many of us can join with his memories. A believing home is a refuge for all of its members. God has meant it to be such a place. We need a place of protection as our faith is little, our strength small, and the enemies many and powerful. The psalmist writes about the protection of God’s kingdom for the family: “Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house” (Ps. 84:3,4).

The home has been called the nucleus of a healthy society. It is also a small congregation. Therefore, God has protected the office of mother and father so carefully. When He gave the Law to His people, one of the commandments mentioned very specifically that children are to obey and honor their parents. That is God’s good and wise will. It will bring a blessing to those who follow it. The command is connected with the office of the parents, not their individual skills or capabilities in parenting.

Home Life Teaches

Home life is our natural teacher; it is a place where the rising generation should receive proper and healthy advice on how to live with other people. All of us carry our childhood homes with us throughout our lives. When newlyweds establish their own home traditions, they bring their own home life experiences to this process.

Home is a place where we should also learn how to ask for forgiveness and how to forgive one another. There is no home where sin doesn’t affect. We need to forgive one another often; everyone needs forgiveness from his or her close ones. Happy is the home where forgiveness is used often! If a quarrel between parents takes place in front of the family, it is beneficial for the children to also see that it has been forgiven. One of the best lessons and examples is when mother and father care for their own shortcomings and sins with their children.

Many of us have precious memories of service occasions at home or other special home activities. It may have taken place at a baptism, a birthday celebration, a Thanksgiving meal, or at the Christmas table. It is good to take time to read Scriptures and to pray together. “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Ps. 119:103).

More than a Dwelling

Home is the relationship of its members, not a physical building. Our family learned that in a very concrete way when we sold our Finland home and moved to the United States. Now, when our children have come to visit us, they have mentioned how interesting it has felt to come to home on the other side of the world. Home was not connected with the house that we built and where we lived for over 20 years. After all, it was only an abode, a place to live. The “home” was something deeper; it was connected to the people who lived there. When the people moved, the home moved with them.

A Place for Forgiveness and Love

Forgiveness sets the atmosphere at home. There are other factors, too, that create a warm, loving, and inviting atmosphere at home. One is the songs and hymns of Zion. As technology has advanced, we have good opportunities to have this kind of music in our homes. Another factor in the home atmosphere is the bond of love between the parents. As the saying goes, “The best gift that a father can give his children is to love their mother.” It is true what John writes: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18). When there is no fear, there is trust and a gracious atmosphere. Who wouldn’t want to live there?

Jouko Haapsaari

Discussion Suggestions:

1. Why do you think the psalmist compares the believing home to a swallow’s nest? (Ps. 84)
2. How can we foster open and free discussions at home?
3. What factors threaten the positive, forgiving atmosphere in our homes?
4. Why is it important that we try to arrange services in our homes (ex. at birthday gatherings, engagement parties, family celebrations, or other special occasions)?

March 2012 *Voice of Zion*