



We're All In This Together

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It's one thing to want an effective Family Ministry in a church; it is quite another thing to actually put one into action. What does it look like? What elements might be important?

Over the last five or so years we have adopted a Faith at Home philosophy at Pakuranga and have been implementing it with the intention of seeing a quantum change in the way our families pass on the Christian faith. For those of you who aren't familiar with it, "Faith at Home is a biblical call to lifestyle discipleship that re-establishes the home as the primary place where faith is nurtured" Mark Holmen, April 2014.

The key champion in any church is the Senior Pastor. He or she doesn't have to do all the heavy lifting, but if the Senior Pastor doesn't have a heart for families, a 'conversion' as Bill Hybels would call it, then an effective Family Ministry will seldom develop. In a medium sized church such as ours this means that as the Senior Pastor I meet with the Children's and Youth Pastors for at least one hour per month to examine the state of our family ministry. This co-ordination is fundamental to us working together.

Our meeting agenda looks at four topics:

1. The promotion of the Faith at Home vision and philosophy
2. How to inspire, empower and equip families for Faith at Home
3. The Formation of a Faith at Home church community
4. Children's and Youth Ministry aspects.

The action items under each of these headings will vary in content from month to month, but 2. essentially covers the provision of Faith At Home training for parents and their children, 3. Is about forming an intergenerational church community, and 4. Is about peer group discipleship, i.e. Children's Church and Youth Group. Taken together these cover children's and young people's discipleship at their three basic levels. Minutes are taken of each meeting and the ability to come back and follow up previous action points has provided some real consistency in this area.

The fun thing about these discussions, however is that they can be energising and wide ranging with considerable flow on benefits for the whole church. For example a recent debate in one of our meetings highlighted the fact that our pastoral care has operated in a piecemeal fashion. Individual family members were being assisted, but not as part of a whole picture. This sometimes meant a lack of co-ordination amongst carers and crucial information not being passed on. We now have a pastoral care meeting in which the whole family is discussed and prayed for together.



Other recent discussions have looked at potential marriage ministry and which home based faith practices to emphasise. Of course some of the business is more routine than this, e.g. the three of us typically plan our All Age services and review them together afterwards. The action points under each of these headings have varied enormously over the years and will vary from church to church, but what the meeting does is to give us a synchronisation that might not otherwise exist. It is also a helpful setting in which to voice and explore differences, to get on the same page together and to become cheer leaders for each other's ministries.

Other churches will no doubt have other practises that they find help them work together well. My question simply would be "What are yours?"