

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Three

A Brief Description of the Guiding Principles for the Children's Work

Scripture references: Heb. 11:7; Psa. 127:3; 2 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:7-16; John 15:2a, 6; Rom. 16:1, 12, 13; Tim. 4:12; Judg. 5:15-16; Dan. 11:32; 1 Cor. 12:14-22

- I. **THE GOAL OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK**—We must concentrate the efforts of our work to target the children and young people among us so that they can become the “seeds of the gospel”—Matt. 13:3, 37-38.
- II. **THE PURPOSE OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK**—Build the children in their humanity to be proper human beings— Dan. 1:3-4; Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 16:18:
 - A. Today, many young people have been damaged with respect to their character; it is because of this that we have a children's work for the children; we need to build up their character—Heb. 10:39; 1 Tim. 3:7; Acts 6:3; Prov. 28:20a.
 - B. To build up a proper humanity is the way to prepare the children to be the best material to receive God's grace—Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 16:18:
 1. It is best to help the children grow up in their humanity by helping them know what a proper human being is; how to honor their parents, and how to be a proper child—Eph. 6:1; Col. 1:10; Prov. 22:6.
 2. In caring for their children, Christian parents need to preach the law to them; we should not first preach grace to the children; we must build them up with proper ethics and morality—2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:24.
 3. Because children are too young to behave according to Christ, they must be taught to behave according to culture; children are preserved by culture while they are growing up—Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:23.
- III. **THE SCOPE OF THE CHILDREN'S WORK:**
 - A. **The Homes**—We need to open up our home, we do not need to meet with others first; we can initiate our home meeting by meeting with our family members—Acts 5:42; 2:46; 12:12:
 1. We who have wives and children all can have a home meeting; we just meet with our folks, with our wife, and with our little children—Acts 12:12.
 2. The meetings in the believers' homes can be a fruitful testimony to the neighbors around, and they provide an opportunity for witness and gospel preaching—John 19:35; 3 John 12:
 3. This influence is most helpful for the families of the Christians; from early days the children will be surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere, and will have constant opportunity to see the reality of eternal things—John 14:17.
 - B. **The Neighborhoods**—Another way of gospel preaching is to preach the gospel to the children; this requires the sisters to pick up the burden:
 1. In our neighborhood there must be a children's meeting that should not be considered as the children's meeting of the church; this is a children's meeting work in the saints' neighborhood.

2. After the children get home from school, the saints may open their home and prepare some snacks to welcome them; then they can sing with the children, tell them stories, and lead them to know God—cf. 2 Kings 4:3.
 3. Gaining people in this way is very safe, because they are taught by us and receive the gospel from us from their youth; thus, they should be very solid—1 Tim. 4:12; cf. Luke 18:21.
- C. **The Children's Meeting**—We expect the children's work among us to be very prevailing; therefore, we need to have a proper realization and preparation for this work—Gen. 1:28; Psa. 127:3:
1. When we speak of the children's work, we are referring to children who have not graduated from elementary school but are more than five years old; these are the target of our children's work.
 2. In Christianity, doing the children's work is considered to be like operating a school; hence, it is called Sunday school:
 - a. In the Sunday school classes they may use textbooks; we do not agree with this method; we feel that our children's meeting should not have the flavor of a Sunday school—Rev. 18:4; Heb. 13:13.
 - b. From our experience we feel that if we regard the children's work as a school and teach our children from textbooks, it will be of more harm than benefit to them.
 3. The saints can open their homes for children's meetings; we need many brothers and sisters to open their homes; how beautiful this service will be and how much the Lord's work will be propagated—Acts 2:46; 6:7a.

IV. MOBILIZING THE WHOLE CHURCH TO CARE FOR THE CHILDREN—When the entire church is mobilized, all the brothers and sisters will have an opportunity to serve; some can open their homes, others can bring the children to the meetings, and still others can teach the children; when all the saints endeavor in one accord for the Lord's heart's desire, the profit will be immeasurable—Judg. 5:15-16; Dan. 11:32; 1 Cor. 12:14-22; Eph. 4:7-16:

- A. The responsible brothers and the co-workers in every place must see the importance of the children's work in God's family; this should be a great matter to us—Heb. 11:7; Psa. 127:3; Gen. 33:5b; Dan. 1:3-4; Matt. 24:45; 25:16; Rom. 9:23; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Tim. 3:4-5; Acts 16:31-32; Eph. 4:12-16; 1 Tim. 4:12.
- B. In carrying out this work, first, a number of sisters should rise up to lead the children's work; the elders should also appoint some sisters to take up this responsibility—Rom. 16:1, 6, 12-13; Mark 15:41:
 1. A number of older sisters must receive this burden, over ninety percent of the children's work requires the sisters' participation; otherwise, there is no way for the children's work to succeed—1 Tim. 5:2a; cf. Col. 4:17.
 2. The sisters in every church should be persistent to promote the burden for the children—cf. Luke 18:1-8; 1 Sam. 1:11.
 3. The sisters should fellowship about the way to carry out the children's work; they can determine how many sisters are available to be with the children, how many young sisters can teach the children, how many children can come and even bring other children to the meetings, and even how many cannot come—1 John 1:3, 7:
- C. Many of the sisters love the Lord, but they need to find the way to do something for the Lord; if we bear the little ones as fruit, the Lord will add them to our account—Matt. 25:14-30; 2 Pet. 1:8; 1 Thes. 2:19:

1. Only eternity will reveal the result of this; perhaps out of a group of children for whom we are caring, some will become apostles—cf. 2 Tim. 3:15; 1:2; 1 Cor. 4:17.
 2. Therefore, I encourage the sisters to do this good work; all the housewives can bring children to the meetings, and the younger sisters can be trained to cooperate with them to bear these little ones as fruit.
- D. We also need the help of the young people in the children's work; this matter must be developed—1 Tim. 4:12:
1. There are quite a large number of children in every locality; as soon as we begin the children's work, the young people will begin to function; they can all take part in serving the children.
 2. The young people need to give themselves to this work, and this will give everyone an opportunity to practice speaking.