

Single Parents Becoming Spiritual Influencers

by Gary and Debbie Pratt

It has long been our belief that parents should be involved in the spiritual growth of their children. This became very evident to us several years ago when we began asking single parents attending the Single Parent Family Camp to serve communion to their children and then to pray over them. We saw a dynamic taking place in the lives of these parents and children that reinforced our belief.

As parents were asked to become the spiritual administrators of this shared experience of communion, we began to realize that many of the parents had never even prayed with their children nor had they been in this type of worship setting as a family. As these parents accepted their role as the spiritual leaders of their homes, right before our eyes we literally saw families coming together.

Every single-parent family needs a church that will help the parents know how to become the spiritual leaders of their homes. Many of these homes have been ravaged by the hurt of divorce or death. They have suffered incredible loss. Many of

the parents have been so beaten down by their circumstances that they don't see themselves as spiritual leaders. These families desperately need a church body that will come alongside them, nurture them back to health, and encourage them to accept the role they have as the spiritual influencers of their children.



Many single-parent families have shared custodial responsibilities. The child/children may be shuffled between homes where there is a believer with custodial care and a non-believer that has visitation privileges, or vice versa. The parents who are

the believers need help in redefining their role as the spiritual leaders to help their children advance in their spiritual growth.

When a single parent will take on the role of a spiritual leader, he can strategically influence his children, no matter what situation the children find themselves in. But, in order to do that, we must equip these parents to PARENT differently. We must provide them the tools for being successful single parents.

We believe this can be done by a church that will intentionally shift from putting a bandage on the "single parent victim" mindset to a "we are still a family" mindset. In order to do this, a church will need to provide a strong singles ministry that will provide a consistent platform to equip these parents. In this setting, parents will be able to stimulate spiritual discussions with other single parents and be encouraged.

If a church will encourage single parents to assume spiritual responsibility, it will increase the potential to impact the heart of a child through the difficult times a single-parent family faces.

