



Family Friendly Churches, part 2 of 2—

# Family Friendly Churches

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(Continued from part 1.)

## A Family Friendly Church—

### •Encourages and includes single parents

In a family friendly church single parents are not treated as second-class citizens. There is also a sensitive, but unspoken, awareness of their special needs. The church is sensitive to the special challenges that come with Father's Day, Mother's Day and Valentines Day. Single parents are fully and thoughtfully included in all of the family-life planning.

### •Provides competent Christian counseling services

Christian families face incredible parenting challenges today. Often they need a skilled person to help them sort through issues and develop strategies as they nurture their children. Their children may need someone to talk to and pray with in order to deal with the problems they are facing. Family friendly churches will identify and resource capable, biblically guided, spiritual professionals to assist their families in crisis.

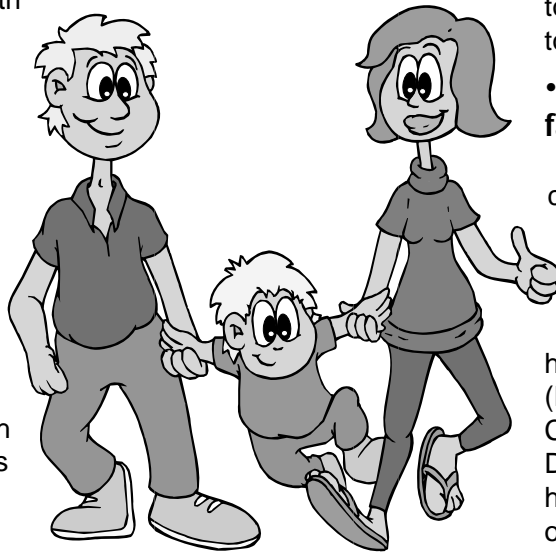
### •Maintains a resource library on family issues

One of the most practical things a church can do is provide a resource library on family

issues featuring reputable family life specialists. These resources should address a wide variety of family issues and be available either at an on-site listening or reading center or to check out to read, listen to, or view.

### •Provides classes in parenting skills

Family friendly churches always offer a wide variety of classes designed to help parents improve their parenting skills.



Classes that present balanced and biblical understandings of discipline, listening skills, conversation, gift identification and development, conflict resolution and child development are a must.

### •Sponsors support groups for parents

Parents with children of all ages face incredible challenges

today. Family friendly churches are unwilling to let parents struggle through these times alone. They understand and value the redemptive power of Christian fellowship within the context of small groups. It just helps to be able to share your struggles with other Christian parents who have been through what you're going through. Family friendly churches are convinced marvelous help is available as individuals with common needs and problems pray together, search the Scriptures together and share together.

### •Features preaching on family issues

The pastor of a family friendly church will purposefully and regularly include family issues in his regular preaching schedule. The wise pastor will take advantage of special family holidays to accent family themes (Father's Day, Mother's Day, Children's Day, Grandparents Day, Valentines Day, etc.). Other holidays also provide a marvelous opportunity to accent the importance of family from a Christian perspective (Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving).

### •Provides opportunities for ministry

One of the greatest opportunities for family bonding and spiritual growth is when a family shares in ministry together. It may be as simple as cleaning the church together, folding bulletins, or visiting a nursing home to bring

encouragement to an older person. If a family has musical abilities perhaps they could prepare special music for a Sunday evening service. What blessing comes as a family plans together, prays together, and performs min-

istry together for God's glory! Blessed is the church that looks for and creates opportunities for families to do this.

God instituted the family as the primary "people-building" unit

from the beginning of time. His plan has not changed! It remains the essential unit for disciple-making. May we do everything in our power to make our churches "family friendly!"

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### Questions For Further Study—

1. How would you rate your church on the "family friendly scale"? What improvements could be made?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Brainstorm with others in your church on ways to incorporate the following:
  - Christian counseling services
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Resource library
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Parenting classes
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Support groups