

## What is the vision for families at New Hope?

Our goal is to see families follow a biblical model of raising children. In Deuteronomy 6, we see that parents are called to act as the primary spiritual leaders in their children's lives. Through teaching and modeling, parents have been given the responsibility and unique ability to be used by God to impress his teaching on their children's hearts.

**...The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates...When your son asks you in the future, 'What is the meaning of the decrees, statutes, and ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?' tell him...** Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20 CSB

What do we learn from this passage? We learn that the teaching of God to the hearts of children is uniquely tasked to the role of parents. Parents naturally have consistent opportunities to teach and model their faith to children when resting at home, traveling, settling down for the evening, and getting started for the day – these four moments are expressed by 'when you sit', 'when you walk', 'when you lie down', and 'when you get up'. And very few other people, if any, are able to model their life powerfully enough for a child to ask, "What is the meaning of everything you do" (this idea is implied by verse 20). Our vision is to see godly children raised up by parents who model a lifestyle of faith and then compliment that lifestyle by teaching the truths of God's word.

## What is the role of the church?

Imagine what it would be like to have regular faith conversations with your kids during their entire childhood years. Imagine walking into church confident that your children will be able to actively engage in faith conversations with their peers because of your conversations at home. Imagine your children standing strong in their beliefs after they have left home because they have seen the truthfulness of those beliefs lived out in your own walk with Christ. That's why we're here – to help you move from imagining towards applying.

We recognize that this concept of parenting is often new to parents. But because we believe it is what God is calling parents to, we choose to stand alongside parents with practical training throughout the year. The training is designed to help you better understand God's calling for you as a parent and help you apply that principle at home.

The ministries to children and youth at New Hope are built around the principle that parents are primary. We want to deeply impact children through their parents/guardians. This means that as often as possible we seek to provide parents with materials that allow them to start the weekly conversations with their children. We then use kids and youth ministries to follow up and reinforce the message they are already hearing from their parents. See the difference - *you start, we follow*.

Also, we recognize that parents are busy these days so we do all we can to keep things as simple as possible while still challenging parents to be who God is calling them to be. For example, each child does not need multiple curriculums at a time for you to teach them the bible. Focusing on one curriculum at a time is sufficient. We don't do this perfectly, but we continue to work towards the concept of simplicity.

Lastly, because we want to ensure that parents are viewed as primary leaders by their children, we limit the amount of time the corporate church spends teaching children without their parents present. This is on purpose. The louder our voice gets, the quieter yours seems. We want your children to lean on you for their spiritual leadership. This won't happen if the church spends more time talking to them than you.

For more information about our principles and practices, please contact one of the family pastors.

## Other's Thoughts

"...churches alone do not and cannot have much influence on children. In fact, the greatest influence a church may have in affecting children is by impacting their parents...in assessing the impact of churches, schools, and parents, it is the latter who have the most dramatic personal influence on children."

George Barna; *Revolutionary Parenting*; Tyndale; 2007; pg. xvii

"No one has more potential to influence a child's relationship with God than parents...No one has more potential to monitor a child's relationship with God than parents...Only one out of five [parents] say they have ever been contacted by their church to discuss their responsibility to influence their children spiritually...Maybe the greatest gift a church can give parents is the confidence and courage to do what God has wired them to do...Doing more for the family may mean that you actually do fewer programs for kids."

Reggie Joiner; *Think Orange*; David C Cook; 2009; pg. 84-92

"What is the most powerful 'program' a child or teenager can 'attend?' The most important spiritual meal in the life of a child is family worship in the home...These few minutes of family prayer and reading the Bible together are supernatural moments of discipleship...Here is the bottom line. God never calls us to do something and then abandons us when we seek to be obedient. God has called all parents in the local church to be the primary spiritual trainers for their children in the home. All God is looking for is our obedience. The Holy Spirit then brings spiritual transformation, not only for the child, but for the parent as well."

Rob Rienow; *Limited Church: Unlimited Kingdom*; Randall House; 2013; pg. 245, 251

"Parents need and want the youth ministry to provide relevant programs and resources for their teenagers, but this should not be taken as permission to hijack the spiritual formation of adolescents away from the family. Churches need to provide resources to parents who may be uninformed about their role or self-conscious in their ability to succeed. The ways of doing youth ministry isolated and removed from the other age-related programs of the church must end. Youth ministry must be integrated into the greater context of the family."

Michael & Michelle Anthony; *A Theology for Family Ministries*; B&H Academic; 2011; pg. 240

"As I examine the expectations of Scripture, I find woven throughout its pages that neither the temple nor the synagogue nor professional ministers bore the first responsibility for training children to be followers of God. The home provided a primary context for discipleship, and parents were expected to serve as primary disciple-makers."

Timothy Paul Jones; *Perspectives on Family Ministry*; B&H Academic; 2009; pg. 19

"The people who have the most access, the best opportunity, and the greatest potential influence – not to mention the biblical responsibility for helping children walk in the truth – are their parents. Our plea to parents and grandparents is that they make the most of the fleeting opportunity they have."

David & Sally Michael; *Indestructible Joy for the Next Generations*; Truth:78; 2018; pg. 19

"Your work as a parent is a thing of extreme value because God has designed that you would be a principal, consistent, and faithful tool in his hands for the purpose of creating *God-consciousness* and *God-submission* in your children...Your church was not designed to replace you, but to assist and equip you for this essential work."

Paul David Tripp; *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family*; Crossway; 2016; pg. 30