

ZAMBIA CONFERENCE
FAMILY LIFE MINISTRIES

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

A. PHILOSOPHY

Scripture affirms the importance of the family and outlines the principles which govern family relationships. At creation God instituted the marriage and with the family (Genesis 2:18-25). As God's primary setting for human development and nurture. Upon redeeming all humanity from the curse of sin, He redeemed marriage and family relationships. Ephesians 5:21 -6:4. Family members are called to relate in ways that befit those who have responded to the Gospel.

The Family is central to the disciple making process – John 8:31, 13:35. As scripture magnifies last day events, the spotlight again falls upon the family. Ellen G White held strong convictions regarding the importance of families and ministry to them. “There is no more important field of effort than that committed to the founders and guardians of the home” (AH 351)

Our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the Home..... by many this home field has been shamefully neglected and it is time that divine resources and remedies were presented, that this state of evil may be corrected. (6T429,430).

The department of family ministries recognizes the significance of family in the lives of believers and non believers alike. The family ministries calls individuals married couples and parents to stretch toward divine ideals, while at the same time extending the redemptive, healing ministry of Christ. Efforts on behalf of families are held to be URGENT vital and integral to the message and mission of the church. Its in the family where winsome skills are learned and developed.

B. OBJECTIVES

When we recognize the mutual strength and support which the church must be to the home and the home to the church, the following objectives have been adopted by the family life ministries;

1. To proclaim the reviving and restorative message of the everlasting gospel within the context of family living. Christ is, and must be acknowledged as the savior and head of every home. In Him, family members are at peace and at peace with each other.

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- Seventh - day Adventist family as a primary discipling unit. A married couple unit of the family
3. To enable parents and families to increase the likelihood of successful transference of Christian Seventh-day Adventist values to next generation. The department encourages an atmosphere within homes and churches which promotes questions and on-going discussion regarding Christian values and tenets of faith among:
 - a. Parents
 - b. Children
 - c. Young
 - d. Old
 - e. Leaders
 4. To create a “Family of God” experience in every seventh-day Adventist church, family ministries fosters an atmosphere which respect and celebrates diversity within congregations and the world church recognizing unity is not found in uniformity but in Christ, the Head of the body.
 5. To empower families for winsome witness. Beyond the priority placed on the home as the most important mission field, family ministries helps families discover and utilize their spiritual gifts in the community around them. Share the good news of life in Christ and to support through their prayers, offerings and service, the mission outreach of the church.

C. AREAS OF EMPHASIS

The focus of family ministries is upon relationships. The ministry to the “and” such as in

- i. Husband and wife
- ii. Parent and child

Thus this ministry concerns itself primarily with relational dynamics rather than the needs of individual's perse. Basic target areas of emphasis for the ministry are:

- a. Premarital guidance
- b. Strengthening marriages
- c. Parent education
- d. General family relationship education with attention also given to;
 - i. Single parenting
 - ii. Step-family needs
 - iii. And the family needs of singles

This institution of marriage is not human rite devised in the dim past of human history as a convenient way to sort out social responsibilities. It is a divine institution, if marriage were of human origin; the human beings would have a right to decide the kind of marital relationships to choose. This is why marriage began with God. It was established at the beginning of human history when He “created the heavens and the earth”. Gen 1:1

THE NEED FOR COMPANIONSHIP

In the creation account, God repeatedly recognizes that His creation was good. (Gen 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31). The only thing that God acknowledges “Not good” is the incomplete creation of man as a single being. Then God said; it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper fit for him” (Gen 2:20)

To be human means more than to be male or female. Man needs to experience the kind of intimate relationships existing within the Godhead. This means that man must be able to enjoy an intimate rational and spiritual fellowship. To complete the creation story man must enjoy the process of production.

A SUSTAINABLE HELPER

God designed woman to be man’s suitable helper, or literally “a helper” corresponding to him”. Eve was Adam’s other half, approximating him in every point and making the marriage union a complete whole. Created not to be man’s slave, but rather his helper. God is also referred to as the helper of the needy in Psalms 33:20, 146:5 she is therefore not inferior but equal in nature and worth, reflecting the same divine image. (Gen 1:26,27). She is an extension of God’s nature yet she is different in function, serving as supportive helper.

Woman created to be man’s counterpart, corresponding to him mentally, physically and spiritually, making man a larger person than he would have been alone bringing into his life a new perspective he would not have known otherwise. The same holds true for man. He brings to his wife a masculine perspective that enlarges her life, making her a more complete person than she could be without him. A marriage relationship therefore enables a man and a woman to become fuller, more complete persons.

THE SINGLE LIFE

Does God contradict Himself in these verses – Matt 19:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 7:7 with Genesis 2:18? Those who have been granted the special gift of “single service” for Christ’s

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... issue it. The exact nature of the gift of celibacy is never fully explained in scripture. How then can God give the gift of celibacy to some while affirming at the same time; it is not good that the man should be alone. (Genesis 2:18). To determine whether a person has a gift of leading a single life for Christ kingdom, it is necessary to apply the two tests in Matt 19:12 and 1st Cor 7:8,9, the question is;

1. Am I able to contain my sexual urges? Ad
2. Do I find satisfaction and companionship in the work of God`s kingdom?

Let us honor those in this line and respect them. Love them, mingle with them with the idea of recruiting them into God`s kingdom. Bring them in through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us not laugh at them, because we don't laugh at Paul the apostle.

God richly bless His family here on earth.