

Ten things church leaders need to do to help families get involved in service!

1. **Regularly and consistently emphasize to families their God given task of spiritual, moral and social development of their children.** Too often families relegate this to the church. Help them see that the church can only supplement what the family does throughout the week. Help them see that if they fail to do this, they create a compartmentalization of spiritual versus secular life which removes their life with Christ from vital connection in their daily lives.
2. **Move away from viewing the scriptures from an intellectual or scholastic perspective to an activist's perspective.** Too often the methods used to teach scripture mimic academic settings, making the Word of God something to be mastered intellectually rather than something which defines how we are to live daily. **We need to return to an activist's approach to the Kingdom of God versus an intellectual's approach.** The measure of a great teaching becomes not how much it entertains or stirs the emotions, but how much change it promotes. Take a fresh look at Jesus and His method of teaching in the scriptures. He seldom used formal approaches. In fact, He tended to take people with Him into real world settings and use what they encountered as the backdrop for instruction.
3. **Create a core group, united in heart and vision, to help promote and model the vision of family involvement in service.** Discover champions in your congregation. Gather them together for prayer and study. Go with them on mission trips, local outreach, and service in local agencies. Provide means and mechanisms for them to share their stories. Be sure to include people from every strata if possible. **Encourage them to take other families and individuals with them in their activities.** They become catalysts for change. They create the grassroots excitement. Continually grow these groups.
4. **Make it a point to take members of your leadership team with you and your family on outreach and service activities.** Think of all the adult Sunday school, fellowship group, or small group leaders. You and your senior staff, if they are on board with this vision, should plan specific outreaches with these leaders in which you serve together. While doing this, share your vision for the families of the church and challenge them to help you promote this value regularly in their classes.
5. **Help people understand the true meaning of the sin of slothfulness, one of the seven deadly sins.** People have filled their lives with activities to the point where they have no time for serving God. This is called slothfulness...**spiritual inattentiveness.** This exhibits itself most readily through over involvement in many good activities, sports being one of the most common. These activities often compete for the very time

set aside for worship on Sundays. When families replace worship with sports or other involvement, it speaks to where their heart's affection truly resides. Sometimes the church itself contributes to this by generating church centered meetings and activities that do little to reach out to our communities. This helps reinforce a compartmentalized view of spirituality and service to God.

6. **Make sure the budget of the church reveals the true values and focus of advancing the Kingdom.** The average church spends 98% of its budget on itself. Is it any wonder that families in our congregations do not develop any desire for service when so little of our resources, and as a result time, are allocated for community outreach? **What would your budget look like if you place community service, missions and evangelism at the forefront of your emphasis?**
7. **The congregation will follow the modeling of leadership in the church (this includes teachers of children, youth and adults).** Leaders should do more than merely talk of service, talk of evangelism and talk of mission trips. They should take part in them. If you want families to serve together, then you must model this service. Make it a point not to merely serve alone as a family, invite another family to serve with you. You can use your service activity to introduce another family to the joy of service.
8. **Your sermons, lessons and informal talks should be saturated with stories of how you and your family are living out God's Kingdom agenda.** As you share your successes, failures, struggles and victories, people gain valuable insights in spiritual formation. Your transparency becomes the screen on which valuable life lessons for families are projected. Include stories from the congregation. Use data from the mission field and from the community regarding local needs. Challenge every teacher and leader to do the same. Keeping the issue continually in front of people is essential.
9. **Become more community minded.** Become familiar with various agencies in your area that are reaching out the widows, orphans, immigrants, single moms, foster children, the homeless, unwed mothers, battered spouses, etc. Visit these organizations and talk with them about what they do and how they do it. Find out from them their needs and how you and your congregation could possibly help. Share with them your vision of having families serve together. Discuss how their organization could utilize whole families as volunteers and the types of work they could do. It would be nice to meet quarterly or bi-annually with these leaders. Make this a time of prayer together for each other's work. Most agencies are hurting for volunteers and would welcome involvement from your church.
10. **Help people begin to think of how God has gifted their family for service.** Help them realize that they don't have to be an expert or professional in order to do significant work with God.