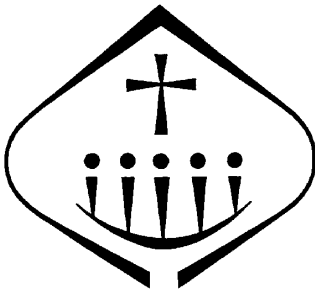


Fathers' Day

(Psalms 78:4-7, NKJV) We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children, That they may set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments;

As Father's Day approaches, I find myself asking, "Why do we have a day set aside to honor our fathers?" Obviously, this is an important day, because our fathers play an important role in our lives, but when God instituted fatherhood, what did he have in mind?

While this is not a popular concept in the 21st Century, according to the Bible, fathers are still the heads of the household. On them rests the responsibility for the care of the family: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Mom's responsibility is to support Dad in his endeavors to see to the needs of the family.



Now, most dads see to the physical needs of the family, making sure that there's food on the table, etc. one way or another. Most dads do their best to keep the kids happy and secure as well.

But what about spiritual care? Too often, this is seen as the pastor's job. Now don't get me wrong. I love teaching, and the basics of the Christian faith as summarized in Dr. Luther's Small Catechism ranks in the top of my favorite subjects, but as I study and teach the catechism, the heading of each section keeps echoing through my mind : "...As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household." Dads, catechesis is primarily *your* job!

"But I don't know the first thing about teaching the catechism!" I hear you saying. First, you need to know it yourself. Thankfully, Dr. Luther gave us simple instructions in the catechism, following each commandment, article, and petition with "What does this mean?" You can teach it by reading one piece each night and asking your family (children, wife, and anyone else in your home), "How does this work out in our lives?" "As you listen to this, does anything come to mind, maybe something that happened this week?" "Why is this important?" You can dig deeper into the meanings of these articles by reading Luther's Large Catechism. It's free online at www.bookofconcord.org. Your pastor would be happy to help as well!

But remember, teaching is more than just words. It's actions, too. Your family will learn by watching you. so teach them by example. Live the way you want your children to live when they're on their own. Model love and forgiveness so when they hear God referred to as "Father," they know what that means. And wives and children, encourage this man in his responsibility!

Ultimately, the secret is, as is so often the case, in the cross. If you haven't been fulfilling your responsibilities, confess your sin to God. He has already forgiven you. He loves you, and He knows what it's like to have trouble teaching a wife and children, but just as you, fathers, love your families, so God loves you and did what few human fathers would be willing to do: He gave up His own Son to save you, and because Jesus took your place on the cross, you will "dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Amen.