

Children in the Church

As a pastor, I am very thankful to God whenever I notice the presence of children in the church. To see them sitting on the front rows of chairs on the Lord's Day at our worship services, or on Tuesday nights for our Bible study-cum-prayer meeting, always brings a surge of joy to my heart. How pleasing is their singing of hymns! They are ever eager to sing their choices of songs with the congregation. Their close proximity to the pulpit further gives me the pleasure of hearing their enthusiastic singing. I rejoice when they hurriedly come to join me to pray. I also thank the Lord that they listen to the preaching of the Word attentively. Whether it be on the Lord's Day or other days, it is wonderful to see many parents making every effort to bring their children along to the Lord's house.

“Forbid Not Little Children to Come!”

Nonetheless, I am also concerned that some other children are afforded very few opportunities to come to church by their parents. Fathers and mothers, it is

your God-given duty to provide as many opportunities as possible for your children to be involved in the church activities. Do not let your undue concern for their secular education and other activities deprive these young precious souls of their great need for spiritual nurture.

Parents, have mercy on the souls of your children! They may be little ones, but they are precious immortal souls. The care for their souls must far exceed the care for their mortal bodies! Have compassion on the poor souls of your “heritage of the LORD” (Psalm 127:3a)! Your vulnerable kids are day by day being sucked into the “miry pit” of anxiety for worldly success. Beware, for the world is relentlessly seeking to ensnare their souls! No God-honouring Christian parent can afford to be slack in ensuring that his or her children are nurtured in the most excellent Christian environment. Christian children's participation in the church activities is far more important than their involvement in their school or other extra-curricular activities. If you only care for their earthly success, you



are being downright irresponsible in your God-given task to nurture their souls!

Make Provision for Little Children to Come!

By way of testimony, from my experience of bringing up three children together with my beloved wife, and having given over twenty years of my efforts to the pastoral supervision of the children in our church, I can sincerely and candidly vouch that nothing is more helpful and profitable for the nurture of Christian children than providing them with maximum (not minimum or occasional) opportunity to participate in the soul-nurturing activities of the church. Whether they be worship services, prayer meetings, children's programmes, evangelism sessions, camps or retreats, let us not undervalue their great profitability in the nurture and protection of our children's souls.

Regular participation in church events with children would mean concerted discipline and commitment on the parents' part. Notwithstanding all the troubles of taking them to church activities, you would have done the most vital duty of guarding and guiding your children's souls. Please do not fear or give in to weariness. The troubles that you bear to ensure the spiritual nurture and fortification of your children's souls will not be in vain. With much prayer and thanksgiving, make every effort to bring

your children to the church activities. Just as Jesus admonishes us, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

As a parting shot, Christian parents and all those who labour in the children's ministry ought also to pray earnestly for the children's repentance, salvation, spiritual growth, fruitfulness, etc., for they are dealing with precious immortal souls. Children are priceless in the sight of our Saviour. Their salvation and sanctification are His concern; so should they be the concern of everyone who ministers to them on Christ's behalf. After all, Jesus specifically says, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15b)! ■

