

Building a Family God's Way

Wilma Paterson – Windsor, Ontario

The week prior to the program, ask the ladies to bring some pictures of their family at various stages of their lives to the meeting. Set up a table for a display of photos.

Introduction: Family life is varied for each lady in this room. Whether your family lives next door or miles away, it's the heart that holds us close. Today, many family members are separated geographically by miles, time zones or oceans. We have the benefit of telephones, computers with internet, and the latest thing called Skype which is free. It's amazing to think that we can chat while looking at our family members on the computer screen who may be on another continent.

The family community is made up of parents, children, grandparents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, cousins and distant relatives. Building a family unit takes hard work and effort for all involved. A family that is built on mutual respect and a deep foundation of love will stand the test of time. Working together builds a family's kindred spirit of family life. It is my hope that as we share our family stories we will be encouraged to see the blessing family brings.

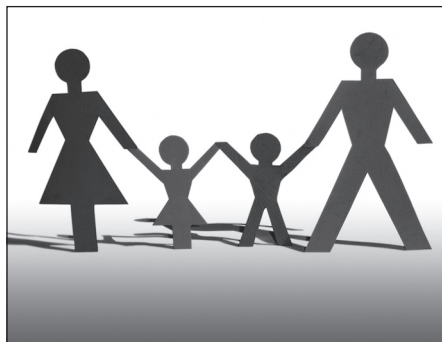
Song: *The Family of God* by Bill and Gloria Gaither

Prayer

Scripture Reading: Psalm 127

Devotional Thought

Psalm 127 speaks to us about the value of divine blessing and reminds us of the ineffectiveness of human effort without God's help. Unless God is acknowledged, how can we expect His blessing on our families? Our best laid plans will fail unless they are God's plans. Many times, when we look



back on our lives, we see that the moments of frustration have been the times when we relied on our own strength in dealing with family life. Family life is made stronger when we rely on God and His wisdom in all our decision making.

For some of us, families are raised and gone "out into the world". In some instances they have not followed our teachings or maintained a spiritual standard. We are beholden to love and pray for them daily and for their own family's spiritual wellbeing.

Psalm 127 in the Message reads, "*If God doesn't build the house, the builders only build shacks. If God doesn't guard the city, the night watchman might as well nap. It's useless to rise early and go to bed late, and work your worried fingers to the bone. Don't you know he enjoys giving rest to those he loves?*"

When we build our family with God at the centre we will find that His blessings will be seen in all areas. God is not against human effort. Hard work honours God, but working to the exclusion of rest or neglecting family may be a cover-up for an inability to trust God to provide for all our needs. A rich bond forms in all family relationships when God is at the heart. We come to a place of trusting God with the small things as well as the big things.



Maybe there are some areas of your own family life you can identify which needs prayer support. Things that you feel anxious about. We can commit all our concerns to the Lord as the great burden bearer. Provide

a piece of paper and encourage the ladies to write of their concern for their family. No one need read it; have them fold the piece of paper and place in a basket. Follow this with a time of prayer specifically for the requests made.

Prayer

I commit into your hands, O Lord, my home, children and grandchildren, and all my projects and concerns. Help me to be happy and faithful as I walk in your footsteps. Amen

We can all conjure up in our minds what family represents in society today, it can be:

- children being shared by parents and step-parents on alternate weekends.
- parents separated – different spouse other than both parents.
- joint custody
- brothers, sisters as a result of other relationships
- grandparents

Wouldn't it be a perfect world if parents loved each other, raised their children and were a "model family"? Wouldn't it be perfect if Christ was the central figure in the home, a united family. You can be yourself with your family, no one knows you better!

Children and family can be a real frustration at times – but, no matter what, family is family, and should be able to be a loving support. We can see this through the dealings of God with His children – even when they strayed from Him and His teachings, He still loved them. He always

sought to bring them back to the place where they were meant to be.

As children mature and start to make their own way in the world, they will always be our children. As

Robert Munch said in one of his books, "*As long as you're living, my baby you'll be.*" If we have laid a secure foundation for them, continually pray for God's guidance over them, and love them, in spite of it all, we have done our job!

Let us reflect on the families we were born into or were chosen to be part of – are we building on the foundation we were given or were we given a "faulty" foundation? The foundation we must build on is the one prepared and laid out for us by our Heavenly Father – a perfect plan.

Sharing of family pictures and discussion. Invite the ladies to share about their families. Keep in mind that this may be very difficult as family dynamics, for some may be challenging.

Chorus: *I'm So Glad I'm A Part of the Family of God.*

Closing Prayer

Thought:

The family is like a book – the children are the leaves.

The parents are the cover, that protective beauty gives.

At first the pages of the book, are blank and purely fair.

But time soon writes memories, and paints pictures there.

Love is the little golden clasp, that bindeth up the trust,

Oh, break it not lest all the leaves, shall scatter and be lost.