“Being the Dads God wants us to be.”

9.30a.m. Sunday 3 September, 2017

Delivered by Senior Pastor Marshall Muller @
the Laidley Baptist Church (Qld).

Prayer

Gracious Heavenly Father, Thanks for our Dads and for their help in life, for the way they model things to us and how they love us and discipline us. I pray for those today who might be fatherless at the moment – whether they have lost their Dad, or whether their Dads are just not around for whatever reason. My prayer is that you O God would be their loving Dad today and always. As we think about Fathers today, teach us today what a great Dad looks like as we consider you. Amen.

Opening:

Happy Father’s Day to all our Dads and Grandads today. What did you get for Father’s Day?

I was reading this week a small boy’s definition of Father’s Day: It’s just like Mother’s Day only you don’t spend so much.

Let me ask you to ponder this one question today - What’s the one piece of advice that your Father gave you that sticks with you today?

My Dad’s advice to me was to be kind to my Mother. But what was the important piece of advice that your Father gave to you (or maybe just gave to you this week).

It’s true - “The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.” – Theodore Hesburgh
I read a great piece of advice from a Dad this week to his son -- Father to teenage son: “No, you can’t use the car— but please feel free to use the lawnmower.” — Vern McLellan

I have great memories of my Father growing up & also my Father-in-Law Harold after we were married. My Dad used to play cricket with us in the backyard. No one could get him out, and he used to bowl faster than the wind.

I remember my Dad deliberately going late to work so that he could watch us compete on School sports days. When I got a job working in a fruit & veg shop when I was 14, it was my Dad who would get me out of bed at 4.30am on cold winter Monday mornings to drive me to work to help unpack the cold room for a few hours before I went to school. My Dad & I would stay up late to watch the Ashes tests on television together.

As a young boy I remember my Dad teaching us the bible stories when we lived in western Qld. and there were no Sunday Schools to go to. I remember my Dad (and Mum) buying me a blue Malvern Star dragster and holding onto the sissy bar at the back while I learned to ride it properly. I remember my Dad teaching me to drive.

Great memories of my Father-in-law, who accepted me as a son after I decided to go out with and eventually marry his only daughter, Yvonne.

My Father-in-law always waited up when we would drive to Hopeland near Chinchilla when our children were little, and he would hear us coming down the road and he would be standing outside ready to greet us in his dressing gown. He would carry our bags inside. He was always excited to see us. He would play with our two children and bounce them on his knee and sing to them.

But the greatest thing I learned from both of these men was their love for God and their humility as they went about their daily life. Many boys (or girls) don’t get the chance like I did to have great role models. They weren’t perfect but they lived out their lives according to God’s Word and allowed us to watch them as they did it.

**Being the Dad God intended**

I wanted to share today what it might look like to be the type of Dad that God intended. In the age we live in right now, we need good Fathers more than anything in the worlds
of our children. We need Fathers to show our boys how to grow into a man – one who knows and serves God and loves his wife like Christ loves the Church.

We need Fathers to show our girls what it is like to be treated like a princess and to be protected and loved by God the Father.

If you are a Dad here today, I want to give you a few things about being the kind of Dad that God intended for Fathers. If you’re a guy here today and you are not a Father yet, this is still great advice to keep stored for later. Here we go ...

**F-A-T-H-E-R: The Six Attributes of a good & Godly Father**

If there’s anything in shortage today it is real fathers that take responsibility for their actions and take care of the financial, spiritual, emotional well being of their homes. Real fathers serve God; real fathers are men of action; real fathers prepare their children for adulthood; real fathers take responsibility, and real fathers are reliable.

Psalm 127:3-5 says - *Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.*

Being a Father and having children is a heritage from the Lord. It is a reward. (Not sure if some of you see your children as a reward!)

So ... Today I’m going to talk about six attributes of good and godly fathers using the acronym F-A-T-H-E-R.

**Here they are – the Key Attributes of A Good Father**

**The “F” in father stands for Faithful – Good Fathers are Faithful**

Good fathers are faithful people. They are first faithful to God and trust God with their whole heart, soul, and mind. Good fathers believe in God’s promises, that God will preserve their families, and that our good Lord will provide their families everything needed for salvation.
Good fathers accept their role as the spiritual head of the household and set the tone for family worship. Good fathers know God’s word; they have an active prayer life, attend church regularly with their families, and obey God’s commandments.

(I remember devotions that my Father & Father-in-law led, and we prayed for people at the end).

The Bible lifts up the examples of several faithful fathers: Joseph – Jesus’ earthly father was faithful because he trusted the angel when he learned that his fiancé, the Virgin Mary was going to give birth to Jesus. He also faithfully moved his family to Egypt when the angel warned him in a dream.

Abraham faithfully believed in God’s promise that his wife Sarah would bear a son at over ninety years of age and he would be the father of a great nation.

So, good fathers are faithful people. They are faith-filled people who are the spiritual leaders in their families.

The “A” in father stands for Action – Good Fathers are People of Action

Most dads like to watch their sports on television; some have a few hobbies, and engage in some “down time” to relax. Despite occasional laziness, good fathers are men of action, especially when their families need them. Good fathers just don’t sit there, they spring into action when: The toilets overflow, the garbage disposal breaks, or when something important around the house that needs fixing. Good dads know how to get things done; they solve problems, and always rise to the occasion. They are the all purpose general handyman.

Good fathers also instill a good work ethic in their children and teach by example. Children need to see hardworking fathers and good fathers challenge their children to learn through activity. Good fathers watch over their children and give them the spaces they need to try new things learn from the mistakes they make. Good fathers are active and engaged parents.

Illustration - A man came home from work late again, tired and irritated. He found his 5-year-old son waiting for him at the door. “Daddy, may I ask you a question?” The dad replied: “Yeah, sure, what is it?” “Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?” The dad got mad and said, “That’s none of your business! Why do you want to know?” The little boy said, “I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an
The dad, wanting to sit down and relax, said, “If you must know, I make $20 an hour.”
The little boy sighed and bowed his head. Looking up, he asked, “Daddy, may I borrow $10 please?”
The father flew off the handle, “If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make is so that you can hit me up for some cash to buy some stupid toy, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. You’re so selfish. I work long, hard hours every day and don’t have time for this.”

The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door.
The dad sat down and started to get even madder about the nerve of his little boy. How dare he ask questions only to get some money. After an hour or so, the man had calmed down, and started to think that maybe he was a bit hard on his boy. Maybe his son really needed the money for something important. And so, the father went up to his boy’s room and opened it, “Are you asleep, son?”
“No daddy. I’m awake,” replied the boy.
“I’ve been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier. It’s been a long day, and I took it out on you. Here’s that 10 bucks you asked for.”
The little boy sat straight up, beaming. “Oh, thank you, daddy!” he exclaimed. Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out a wad of crumpled up bills.
The dad, seeing that the boy already had some money, started to get angry again. The little boy slowly counted out his money, and then looked up at his dad.
The dad, now ticked off, demanded to know what was going on, “Why did you want more money if you already had some?”
The little boy replied, “Because I didn’t have enough, but now I do. Daddy, I have $20 now…and I’d like to buy an hour of your time.”

Good Dads are people of action – wanting to spend time with their children. Helping them to see how life works. Sometimes we forget that.

The “T” in father stands for Teacher – Good Fathers are Teachers

Good fathers are teachers and prepare their children to enter adulthood and face the tough world around them. This means that fathers give their children survival skills that will help transform them into successful adults. Unfortunately, most children do not listen to the advice of their fathers. In order to be good teachers, fathers must be credible and earn their children’s trust and love.
Ephesians 6:4 states: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” Here St. Paul is cautioning fathers not to criticize their children, but instead focus on teaching them with the same love and understanding that our Lord used when teaching the disciples.

“One father is worth more than a hundred schoolmasters.” – George Herbert

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 states:

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

As fathers we need to be the teachers in their lives. Teaching them of the God who loves them and saves them.

Proverbs 22:6 - Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

The “H” in father stands for Hope – Good Fathers offer Hope to their Families

Good fathers are a source of hope and inspiration for their families. Dads are the family’s pillar of strength and they are the ones that tell us that things will be all right when tough times are around the corner. Even though dads complain, good fathers are optimistic and resilient because they trust God for everything.

Good fathers also trust their children and constantly encourage them to pursue their passions, fulfill their dreams, and plan for their future. Clare Boothe Luce once said, “Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present.” In contrast, good fathers are as the Father found in the Parable of the Prodigal Son; good fathers are forever hopeful and inspire their families to push beyond themselves.
The “E” in father stands for Example – Good Fathers are a positive Example

Good impressions are important and good fathers are positive role models to their families. Children tend to imitate and adopt their parent’s behaviors; therefore, fathers must be good husbands, live moral lives, and treat all people with respect and dignity.

As the home’s spiritual leader, good fathers take an active part in their children’s spiritual development. While mothers spend more time with the children in a traditional home, the importance of the father’s role cannot be underestimated and St. Paul’s advice to the Corinthian Church holds true in I Corinthians 11:1. “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” The most important example that father can make to his children is to love others.

The story is told of a father of five children who came home with a toy. He summoned his children and asked which of them should be given the present. “Who is the most obedient one here? Who never talks back to Mom and does everything that Mom says to do?” He inquired. There were a few seconds of silence, and then all of the children said in one accord: “You play with it Daddy!”

Are you a positive example to your children (even if they are grown up)? Do they see God’s heart in you? Are you teaching them the important things of God’s Word?

Proverbs 14:26 - Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge.

Proverbs 20:7 - The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.

Finally, the “R” in father stands for Reliable – Good Fathers are Reliable

Good fathers are reliable, responsible, and consistent. They work hard to “bring home the bacon” and provide for their family’s needs. Good fathers are also helpful in times of crisis.

Sadly, many men today are not consistent in their fatherly duties and neglect to see the importance of their role as a father themselves. Fathers need to be reinstated to the level of importance that God intended for them! American morality and spiritual
integrity is at an all time low because of the declining value placed on the role of the father in today’s society.

Children need attentive and reliable fathers to be their role models. Newspaper columnist Abigail Van Buren wrote, “If you want your children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders.” Responsibility isn’t a curse, it’s a blessing.

Booker T. Washington said, “Few things help an individual more that to place responsibility upon him and to let him know that you trust him.”

Yet, in order for children to grow up into responsible adults they need a stable and reliable role models. Good fathers are consistent in how they meet life’s challenges. Irresponsible people run away from problems, unreliable fathers make excuses for their inconsistent conduct, and never lead a life of integrity. Good fathers are of proven character, they are faithful to their calling, and are reliable to those that need them. They take their job seriously. It’s a job given to them by God.

A father’s influence is paramount to a child’s development into a happy, well-adjusted, productive adult. Fatherhood is not motherhood; however, it is an active rather than passive activity. Good fathers who are involved in their children’s lives, look out for their best interests. Dads have to make hard choices and realize that popular decisions are not always the best decisions. Good fathers are able to discern and develop their children’s hearts, souls, and minds.

A young successful attorney said: “The greatest gift I ever received was a gift I got one Christmas when my dad gave me a small box. Inside was a note saying, ‘Son, this year I will give you 365 hours, an hour every day after dinner. It’s yours. We’ll talk about what you want to talk about, we’ll go where you want to go, play what you want to play. It will be your hour!’”

“My dad not only kept his promise,” he said, “but every year he renewed it—and it’s the greatest gift I ever had in my life. I am the result of his time.” — Moody Monthly

CONCLUSION

As you’ve listened to this message and the illustrations, they are all good advice. My Father didn’t always get it right all the time. I respected the times he got it wrong and owned up to it. I respected the times he loved me even when I deserved punishment. I appreciated his forgiveness when I did the wrong thing. But I appreciated him as a Dad. He was a good example. You might not have had the perfect Dad, but did you know that we have the perfect heavenly Dad? One who has done everything right – given us salvation, forgiveness, love, protection, comfort, every gift imaginable.
God intended our fathers to be godly Dads and godly husbands. To be like Him. His Word (the Bible) declares this theme, over and over again.

The greatest story on Father’s Day is the Parable of the Lost Son. God waits for him even though he has blown it. He loves him and receives him. Puts the ring on his finger and clothes him in the finest clothes and has a welcome home party for him. He is forgiven for all the stuff he has done wrong. The Father is so glad that the son that was lost has now been found. He wants to tell everyone.

That’s the type of Heavenly Father we have. On a day like today, if you are Fatherless or struggle with your Father, Jesus gives us the model for the best Dad – our father in heaven. One who loves us regardless of how messed up we have become. A father who desires to give us the best that the kingdom has to offer.

A father who has the deepest love for you today.

We’re going to finish by singing about our amazing Heavenly Father and his gift of salvation for every person. On Father’s Day as you open your gifts, and as crazy as they might be remember that our Heavenly Father has given you a gift – an eternal gift. The gift of life through Jesus Christ.

Let’s pray …

Thank you our Heavenly Father for showing us the best example of Fatherhood. Thank you for reminding us of the qualities and characteristics of being the type of Dad you intended. I pray for all Dads with us today that they will be wonderful role models to their wives, their sons, their children and their neighbours. Bless each of them today as they go and serve their families. Give them boundless love to bring to their families. Bless them with wisdom and happiness in their lives as they serve you with their lives.

We are so thankful for good Dads who listen to the voice of their heavenly father. Show the sons what it is to live in your will as a wonderful godly father.

Thank you for your deep love for us. May we as Father’s reflect your deep love to our children and wives. May the work of Christ dwell richly in our hearts as we do.

We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

Closing Song – How Deep the Father’s Love