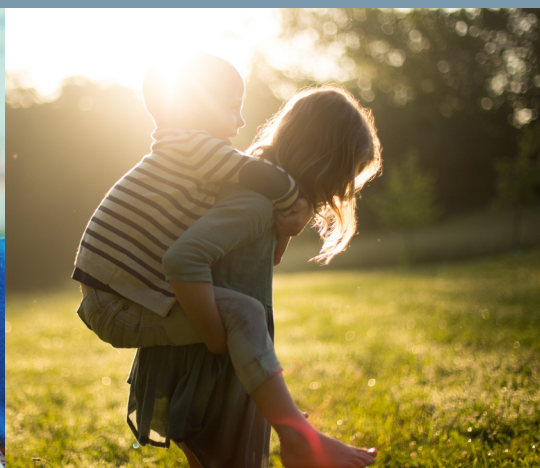


# Time to Flourish

PROTECTING FAMILIES' TIME FOR WORK AND CARE

// A REPORT BY **FAMILIES VALUED**  
AN INITIATIVE OF THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

JULY 2018



# Time to Flourish

## PROTECTING FAMILIES' TIME FOR WORK AND CARE

By Rachel Anderson and Katelyn Beaty

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The Center for Public Justice (CPJ) is an independent, non-partisan, Christian organization devoted to policy research and civic education. Our mission is to equip citizens, develop leaders and shape policy to serve God, advance justice and transform public life. Learn more at [CPJustice.org](http://CPJustice.org).

Families Valued, an initiative of CPJ, researches and promotes public policies and workplace practices that honor God's call to both work and family life. Learn more at [FamiliesValued.org](http://FamiliesValued.org).

## About the Authors

**Rachel Anderson** is a Resident Fellow with the Center for Public Justice, where she directs the Families Valued initiative. Her work focuses on work and family policy and faith-based civic engagement. Previously, Rachel served as the Director of Faith Affairs at the Center for Responsible Lending. She is a graduate of Harvard Law and Divinity Schools. Rachel is the parent of two young children and a member of an intergenerational household with her kids, husband and her parents, outside of Washington, DC.

**Katelyn Beaty** is an editor at large with Christianity Today, where she previously served as the magazine's youngest and first female managing editor. She is the author of *A Woman's Place: A Christian Vision for Your Calling in the Office, the Home, and the World* (Simon & Schuster) and has written for The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Atlantic and Religion & Politics on religion and culture. An Ohio native and graduate of Calvin College, she lives in the Chicago suburbs, where she attends an Anglican church.



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# // Families nurture and manifest the image of God in each person.





## // Executive Summary

Family is the smallest yet most fundamental of human institutions. Families provide the structure in which the youngest and most vulnerable persons in a society are cared for. The health of families and entire societies are bound up with one another.

The Families Valued *Time to Flourish* report, published by the Center for Public Justice, examines the responsibilities of workplaces and public policy relative to family time.

Today, American families and the institution of the family are under tremendous stress. Family stress includes the struggle to secure family time together, be it after the birth of a child or the ordinary routines of homework and dinnertime. A fast-paced, 24-hour economy enables work at all times of the day or night. Some parents or caretakers worry that they cannot take time off without risking their job or financial stability. These pressures cut into crucial family time together. An estimated 20 percent of mothers in the United States, for example, return to work a few weeks, sometimes even just days, after giving birth.

God did not intend work and family to exist in conflict, but rather to complement one another. God calls humans to both family life and work. Families nurture and manifest the image of God in each person. They provide a critical foundation for a healthy society, raising the next generation of citizens, workers and family members. Work, though also an arena of image bearing, should not absorb the whole of life. God placed limits on work by setting apart the seventh day of creation for rest. Likewise, Christians honor God and make time for family, community and rest by observing the Sabbath and by recognizing the distinct seasons, rhythms and times in human life.

Christian families can form themselves along a divine vision of work and family as holistic complements. As citizens and culture-shapers, Christians should advocate for and develop policies and practices that protect, rather than fragment, family time.

Workplaces are called to treat all workers with dignity and respect. A healthy community of work develops the persons within it as well as offers a good or service to the world. Organizational leaders and others who shape the workplace can do so in ways that anticipate workers' family responsibilities rather than treat them as an aberration. They can deploy technology, training and creative problem-solving to help mend the work-home divide.

Alongside civil society institutions such as workplaces, public policy has a role to play in supporting family life. Government is called to protect the varied spheres of human life and their varied seasons, including seasons of family care. Laws such as the Family Medical Leave

Act (FMLA) help protect family time, affirming cultural norms about the balance of work and family time. Good policy can also address the legal gaps and economic barriers that leave so many families' time unprotected and at risk. Many parents do not take time off for family because they cannot afford to do so. And, while some employers can and do provide paid leave or related benefits, many do not. Further, small businesses, nonprofit and religious employers often face significant hurdles developing and funding benefits like paid family leave.

Scholars and economists from across the political spectrum say the time has come for paid family leave for all workers. A broad paid family leave system, they argue, can support a healthy workforce and healthy families without over-burdening smaller employers. In California, one of the first states to develop such a system, paid family leave has enabled parents to spend more time providing care to young children and family members. Health researchers have linked parental leave with a whole host of benefits, from lower infant mortality to improved maternal health and improved work history. Likewise, evidence points to the benefit of family-supportive workplaces not only for worker well-being but also for workplace productivity, effectiveness and retention.

Cultivating the conditions of family flourishing depends on all segments of society, civil society and government alike, cooperating. We recommend the following steps for workplaces and public policy with respect to work and family time.

## **Recommendations**

1. Workplaces and public policy alike should protect workers' time to care for family members.
2. Workplaces, especially faith-based organizations, should align family-supportive values and workplace practices.
3. Policy-makers should develop a system of paid family leave so that all workers can attend to seasons of family responsibility.

Given the fundamental role of family in God's design, it should be no surprise that enabling family time yields abundant benefits. When people are empowered to fulfill their caregiving responsibilities, all of society flourishes. Christians who recognize the socially foundational nature of family must not only talk about the importance of family, but enact policies and create cultures that tangibly demonstrate its importance. Protecting and enabling family time at crucial moments — whether birth, adoption, illness or death — is one essential way to uphold the enduring value of the family.

# // Introduction

Family is the smallest yet most fundamental of human institutions. Families provide the structure in which the youngest and most vulnerable persons in a society are cared for. Many religious traditions observe that the health of families and of entire societies are bound up with one another. Healthy families help children grow and flourish to become the next generation of citizens, workers and parents.

American families and the institution of the family are under tremendous stress. The rising number of children raised by single parents or in fragile families is a critical indicator of family stress. Family stress also manifests itself in parents' struggle to provide for and spend time with a new child, in the push and pull of work schedules and childcare gaps.

When families flourish, rather than fragment and struggle, they benefit from a diverse set of conditions. Cultural and moral norms support family life, honoring love, marriage and lifelong fidelity. Families are able to sustain themselves financially; their economic collaboration is likely to benefit family members rather than expose them to financial risk. Community connections also help families to thrive, providing encouragement, education, respite and support for those involved in the often-difficult work of family caregiving. Finally, families thrive when they have the freedom and capacity to coordinate family time together.

This report explores the topic of time as it relates to family life and family stress.

Family time and traditions enable parents to provide a stable base from which their children can thrive. Family dinner is the classic example. The children of families that gather regularly for dinner demonstrate better mental health and higher levels of resilience.<sup>1</sup> A wide variety of family time and traditions promote family cohesion. Yet many families, especially low-wage and low-wealth families, struggle to dedicate as much time to family as they would like. Families with minimal savings and precarious work must substitute wage-earning for family care, even at crucial moments such as the birth of a new child.

The report proceeds in four sections. The first section shares family stories and data on family stress. Section two places the contemporary conversation about work-life stress into the historical context of economic and cultural shifts affecting the family. Section three articulates Christian theological foundations about God's purposes for work, family and rest and the relationship between these aspects of human life. Section four argues that key institutions such as workplaces and government have a role in supporting family flourishing. Because families are foundational to a healthy society and economy, workplaces and public policies should affirmatively protect and enable family time. Specific recommendations for workplaces and public policy proceed from what each institution is called to do and what each can do given their organizational and economic constraints. The Appendix proposes principles to guide Christian organizations and citizens as they create and promote family-supportive workplace cultures and policies.

## // 1. Stories of Family Life and Family Time

Nicole Massie Martin is one of the most respected preachers and church leaders in Charlotte, North Carolina. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary (M.Div.), Martin recently served as executive pastor of The Park Church — a prominent African American congregation in Charlotte — and was inducted into the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers at Morehouse College. Today, Martin serves as a city mobilizer for the American Bible Society. She is married to Mark, also a minister, and they have two young daughters. Martin describes how having children “reorients the center of your home” in terms of schedules and responsibilities. “It’s challenging to do a 9-to-5 when kids have to eat dinner at 5:30,” says Martin. “The way we keep happy, healthy children is keeping them on a schedule. And because they shifts the entire schedule that managing dinner and challenging after she has

**80%**  
**of mothers  
report being  
overwhelmed  
by stress.**

have a schedule, it really just of my life.” She mentioned homework are particularly worked a full day.

Martin resonates with recent that 59 percent of women about their work-home husband experiences extended family and the available to his family after “societal expectation on me primary discipler of my children.” Her experience speaks to what sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild has called the “second shift” for many American women. That is, as women’s work outside the home has increased, unpaid housework such as cooking, cleaning and childcare has stayed the same. Societal expectations for fathers have not caught up with women’s economic participation and desire to work in the marketplace. This is one reason why Barna Research Group found that 80 percent of today’s mothers report being overwhelmed by stress, 20 percent to the point of illness.<sup>3</sup>

findings from Barna Group say they are dissatisfied balance.<sup>2</sup> Martin says her the stress of providing for demand of being relationally a day’s work. There is a as a mother ... that I am the

The Martins received an outpouring of support from the church after the birth of their first child. Congregants donated diapers, a stroller and other baby care items. Martin says it was a “blessing [to be] part of such a giving and loving congregation.” But, she notes, there were no parental leave policies in place for her to take the time necessary off to care for her newborn. “From what I understand, unless an African American church is connected to a wider denominational body that provides things like 401(k) [plans] and provides personnel guidelines ... it is unlikely that you would have [a parental leave policy] built in.” She ended up using her vacation days as well as a short-term disability insurance policy after their first child was born.



Martin notes that single and/or childless women are unlikely to negotiate for maternity leave upon being hired, for fear that they would be seen as selfish or demanding. When a company or organization does not have parental leave policies in place, it puts the onus and responsibility on the employee seeking to take necessary time to care for family. Martin says this responsibility carries “psychological ramifications.” “You’re supposed to be all excited about having this baby, and you’re now worried about, How am I going to pay for this? What’s going to happen when I go back to work? Do I have to work indefinitely because I used up all my vacation days? What’s my value to this organization, and do they really care about my family?”

**“You’re supposed to be all excited about having this baby, and you’re [worried], ‘What’s going to happen when I go back to work?’ and ‘What’s my value to this organization, and do they really care about my family?’”**

Rev. Dr. Nicole Massie Martin

Charles Camosy and his wife faced similar stresses when they decided to adopt three children from the Philippines in 2016. Camosy, a professor of ethics at Fordham University, a Catholic institution in New York, and his wife married in their 30s and felt compelled to adopt from the Philippines. After learning more about adoption, they decided to adopt three school-age children, who are typically considered not as “desirable” for adoption as newborns. “They started out in third, seventh, and tenth grade, so we went from zero to crazy immediately,” says Camosy. “Without Fordham offering a semester of paid leave, I don’t know what we would have done.” He notes that his wife’s job with the State of New Jersey did not offer a leave policy and required her to use sick and vacation time to adjust to life with three children. Fordham is unusual in offering its employees paid leave for adoption as well as foster care, but Camosy says the generous policy aligns with the university’s Catholic vision of the integrity of the family. An increasing number of men like Camosy recognize that intimate involvement in the rhythms of home and family are crucial to their own flourishing and their family’s well-being.<sup>4</sup>

## **FAMILIES UNDER ECONOMIC STRESS**

The Martins and Camosys are educated, middle-class families with professional careers. Even though both couples are in a high-stress season of parenting, they enjoy financial stability and job security, and report high levels of happiness. The work-family dynamic is significantly more strained for working-class and low-income households, where hourly-pay work, unpredictable work hours, transportation, housing, health care and child care are all daily responsibilities that must work in harmony in order for the family to survive. Family illness, a car breakdown or even a changed bus route could significantly affect a family’s well-being. After the birth of a child, many working-class and low-income parents find themselves in a precarious financial situation.

Susan Leon runs Mom's Place, a faith-based program that serves young parents in Phoenix, Arizona. Many of the parents served by Mom's Place grew up in poverty and in families affected by addiction and abuse. At Mom's Place, they work through trauma, practice their own recovery, unlearn dysfunctional parenting habits and cultivate new ones. It is not easy. Leon says she is inspired by the resilience and persistence of the parents she meets. After working with parents for 20 years, Leon has seen the program's impact across generations. The children of the first cohort of children raised by Mom's Place parents are now finishing high school. Leon says teen pregnancy is rare in this second generation.

Most mothers affiliated with Mom's Place work outside the home. They serve fast food, package goods at an Amazon warehouse or work in a large detention facility located in Phoenix. They work hard to secure and keep jobs. Paid work outside the home after having children is an economic imperative, and mothers feel a sense of pride about work as well. Leon explains, "Once you get a taste of actually being more independent and earning your own money, that builds something up in you. You don't want to give that up."

But work requires time away from children — a sacrifice that many mothers feel is necessary for the sake of their children. Leon says that many mothers "feel this need to get back out in the workforce and bring home

a paycheck ... You have food stamps, but food stamps [don't] buy diapers and ... detergent, and [they don't] pay for the gas to get to work. You've got to have something coming in."

'Jane', one of the parents connected with Mom's Place, recently gave birth to a daughter. Jane has worked at a call center for the past two years while taking care of her now 6 year old. She worked until she went into labor. Jane explains, "my work doesn't pay for maternity leave, but they told me they would hold my job if I returned within the month." Jane wanted to have more time with her newborn but, ultimately, chose to return to work. "...[I]f I don't go back to work in two weeks, we will not have enough money to pay our electric bill," she says. "I really wanted to breastfeed my baby this time, but I don't think I can do it if I go back to work. It makes me sad."

For many households, work also requires a choice among less-than-ideal child care options. Family and friends are a common choice, but a complicated and sometimes dangerous one in the case of addiction or abuse in the extended family. Other mothers seek out child care centers and, more rarely, child care subsidies. Single parents who work night shifts and have no other option may have to seek out an overnight child care center.

**“If I don’t go back to work in two weeks, we will not have enough money to pay our electric bill.”**

*Jane, Phoenix, Arizona*

Nationally, both single and two-parent households struggle with the costs and trade-offs between work and child care. Child care in the United States costs on average \$9,589 per year, a significant portion of the annual income of a working-class couple.<sup>5</sup> Yet if one parent stays home, one salary may not be enough to support the family. Further, if a parent chooses to stay home, he or she could lose the health insurance benefits that come with a paid job. Thus, many families choose to continue to work and place their children in child care, even at a significant cost.

Transportation also imposes costs and time burdens. Lack of access to a car — something most middle-class families take for granted — means extra hours spent each day using public transportation.

with a Phoenix-area at 3:45 a.m. in order to time. Many clients of Services, a large social serving families in Grand several hours each transportation to and well as to a child care time gets absorbed into Dallas Leneer, a pastor

**“The schedule is causing a lot of divorce in the community.”**

Adeng Leek  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Project Green, a financial empowerment group in Grand Rapids. He notes that Grand Rapids — and many other U.S. cities — do not have an extensive mass transit system.

One mother affiliated church gets on a bus arrive at work on Bethany Christian service agency Rapids, must spend day taking public from their jobs as provider. “So much transit time,” says and director of

Immigrant and refugee families who have come to the United States in search of safety and security are also in a precarious situation. They have a unique vantage point on American culture as it shapes work and family life. Adeng Leek, a Sudanese refugee living in Grand Rapids, Michigan, says that she and her husband both work. It is a decision, she says, that is necessary, but stressful. “In my country, mothers are in the home, fathers go to work,” she said. “Here, both parents need to work. This is not how I was raised. It’s a trauma.” She mourns the loss of time she would have spent with her sons, helping them with homework or other tasks. She and her husband work opposite shifts, one during the day and one at night. She does not see her husband most of the time. Her situation is common among families in her community and can lead to family breakdown. “The schedule is causing a lot of divorce in our community,” Leek observes.

Dhan Khatiwoda, a refugee and leader in Grand Rapids’ Bhutanese community, likewise observed that the increased need for a dual income means that parents and children go long periods without seeing each other. “Even in the refugee camp, family was always together,” he said. Many refugees work for companies where weekend hours are mandatory; others want to work more than eight hours a day in order to secure their financial footing. But the focus on work can, over time, lead to unintentional neglect. “Some of our refugees’ kids now



are into underage drinking or drugs,” says Khatiwoda. “When we try to find out the root cause... some of them even answered, ‘We didn’t have enough time from our parents, so we had to find another friend who could give us time.’” Khatiwoda says that grandparents and extended family are often able to step in, but that parents worry that they are asking too much. He sees the fact that their children are experimenting with drugs and alcohol as a sign of families under duress.

### **FAMILIES STRETCHED THIN; CHILDREN AT RISK**

Parents of children with special needs face additional stresses balancing work and family, due to additional doctors’ appointments and significant health care costs.

Jenny Mullins is a mother in Phoenix as well as an advocate for other parents of children with special needs. After her young child received an early autism diagnosis, Mullins quit her teaching job in order to spend 20 hours a week taking her daughter to a specialized therapy for children with autism and another 12 hours to a center providing similar early intervention. Her daughter now attends a Montessori school where the teachers are trained to teach children with disabilities. Mullins is an advocate because of the strain she and her peers face: “There are a lot of parents that are stretched so thin: burnout, depression, anxiety, even suicidal thoughts.” She notes that one single mother of a child with disabilities considered giving her child up to the state because she could not manage it all.

The stresses facing prospective parents can have grave consequences as well. In discussions of family flourishing, work, and economics, it is worth noting that economic stresses lead some women to choose not to carry their children to term. According to a 2018 survey of 1,000 women published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, the most common reason women gave for having an abortion was not being able to afford or support a child, or another child.<sup>6</sup> Unintended pregnancies and abortions are concentrated among women in difficult economic circumstances. In 2014, 49 percent of women who chose abortion were living below the poverty line.<sup>7</sup>

In the 2017 HBO documentary, *Abortion: Stories Women Tell*, filmmaker Tracy Droz Tragos focuses much of the narrative on a woman named Amie, a 30-year-old single mom who has two children.<sup>8</sup> Amie works 70 to 90 hours a week, working two minimum-wage jobs to make ends meet. When Amie finds out she is pregnant, she feels torn but ultimately decides to have an abortion due to the economic strain that she feels another child would put on her already-fragile family. The cost of having a child, coupled with the demands of two low-paying jobs that do not honor family commitments in any programmatic way, led Amie to feel that she could not choose life. Her story illuminates the tragic ways in which the demands of the modern workforce are largely absent of protections for family time and flourishing, and further undermine some of our most cherished values.



## // 2. Family Time Stress in Context

Wrapped up in so many family stories are stories about time. Nicole Martin Massie described the shift to parenthood as one that reorients the organization of one's life and one's day. The mothers at Mom's Place sacrificed time with children in order to secure and keep a job. Parents of children with special needs struggle to fit expansive and sometimes unpredictable caregiving needs with the rhythms of the work day. Dhan Khatiwoda and Adeng Leek mourned the scarcity of time for simple acts of togetherness like family dinner and homework help.

Research suggests that time and the capacity to shape time according to a family's needs is an important component of family flourishing. Children who grow up with solid family rituals — from the daily ritual of a shared meal to seasonal family rituals — typically demonstrate greater resiliency and mental health.<sup>9</sup> Family rituals also contribute to family cohesion. As anthropologists have observed, “When groups act in rhythm — when they do the same thing according to the same repeated time pattern — they tend to become more tightly knit.”<sup>10</sup> Developing and sustaining these rituals requires time and a degree of control over time that proves challenging to parents who face long work hours, irregular or night shifts or a lengthy commute.

### **FROM HOUSEHOLD-BASED ECONOMIES TO ECONOMY-DRIVEN FAMILIES**

Major cultural and economic shifts of the past several centuries help provide a context for understanding contemporary family stress and family time stress in particular.

The Industrial Revolution shifted the locus of economic activity from the homestead and the farm to the factory and later, the office. Families who once worked alongside each other to provide for themselves began to spend much of their days apart. The Industrial Revolution's shifting of work from the home to the factory created a division of labor and a cultural norm of one parent (usually the father) leaving the home to earn a living wage, and the other parent (usually the mother) staying home to manage household duties and child care.

The Industrial Revolution not only changed the location of work, it also changed the relationship between work and time. Factories introduced shift-work, scheduling workers around the clock in order to maximize use of expensive machinery and facilities. Any hour of the day or night could now amount to work time. With respect to both location of work and time of work, economic activity that was once embedded in the family, shifted away from the family's control. The family was increasingly subject to the external demands of the economy. Family became embedded in the larger rhythms and demands of the market.

Families with enough income and wealth could afford to divide labor between domestic and wage work tasks in order to protect a separate family sphere. However, many Americans, including working-class households, immigrant families and many African Americans, never had the ability to divide work and home life nor to protect family time in such a way. Africans brought to the United States as slaves were typically separated from their spouses and children because U.S. law did not recognize their families. Freed African American women and men undertook paid work on farms, factories or white families' homes. Through the late 19th and 20th centuries, many immigrant and black women spent much of their time caring for other people's children instead of their own.

Today, in a post-economy, the economic are intensifying. A highly driven market calls purchase and consume work and nonstandard particularly for low-categories that typically or unpredictable restaurant, health care service — continue employees face subtle their time at home, at night or completing previously set aside for family. For a variety of reasons, from economic need and technology to ingrained work ethic, Americans work more hours per year than those in many other industrialized nations, including Japan, Britain and Germany.<sup>13</sup>

NATIONALLY,  
AN ESTIMATED

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**20%**

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CHILD'S BIRTH

industrial, globalized pressures on all families connected, consumer-for people to produce, around the clock. Shift-scheduling is common, wage workers.<sup>11</sup> Job require nonstandard hours — such as retail, and global customer to grow.<sup>12</sup> White-collar and overt demands on such as checking emails projects in times that were

The economic pressure on families is apparent in key moments of family life such as the birth or adoption of a child. Susan Leon, for example, cannot remember a time that a working mother associated with Mom's Place took more than four weeks off from work after giving birth to a child. Nationally, an estimated 20 percent of new mothers must return to work within days or weeks of a child's birth.<sup>14</sup> This rapid return to work occurs when children are intensely vulnerable and dependent. Infants require feeding and soothing at all hours and develop the capacity to breastfeed as well as recognize and bond with parents and loved ones in those first few months. Yet many parents, lacking sufficient income or savings to make it through a period of non-work, must substitute paid work for caregiving during even these vulnerable stages of a newborn's life.

### **INCREASING DEMANDS ON FAMILY TIME, FEWER BUFFERS**

Even as the economy demands increasing time in the form of work and attention, the buffers that help families mediate market and family life are thinning. Single parenthood is

on the rise.<sup>15</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau reports that about 23 percent of children today live with a single mother, an experience that coincides with educational attainment and class. Today, poor and working-class Americans are more likely to cohabitate rather than marry.<sup>16</sup> Unmarried couples are less likely to remain intact throughout their child-raising years than married co-parents.<sup>17</sup> Single parents often face intense, near-irresolvable time pressures attending to both caregiving and work.

Many married households face time pressure as well. In 63 percent of two-parent households, both parents work, and in nearly half of those households, both parents work full time.<sup>18</sup> Globalization and advances in technology have eaten away at earnings that breadwinners once relied upon to support entire households.<sup>19</sup> Further, the past quarter-century has seen a decline of high-paying, blue-collar jobs for lower-skilled workers. Labor market changes have especially hit jobs traditionally held by men without a college degree.<sup>20</sup> Mothers, single or married, are now an essential part of household economies and the broader economy. They are often just as likely as fathers to find decently paying work that provides for the family. Researchers at the Brookings Institute recently concluded, for example, that among adults with a high-school education but no bachelor's degree, women

are increasingly likely to find full-time work, while full-time work for men is on the decline.<sup>21</sup>



Meanwhile, families in which one parent stays at home often sacrifice income in order to do so. The median income for a household with one full-time parent and one stay-at-home parent is \$55,000, significantly less than two-earner households.<sup>22</sup> These families may have to stretch to meet basic expenses, retirement and emergency savings and child-rearing costs, which average over \$12,000 per child, per year.<sup>23</sup>

Many jobs fail to provide the kinds of benefits that might enable workers to spend time with family.

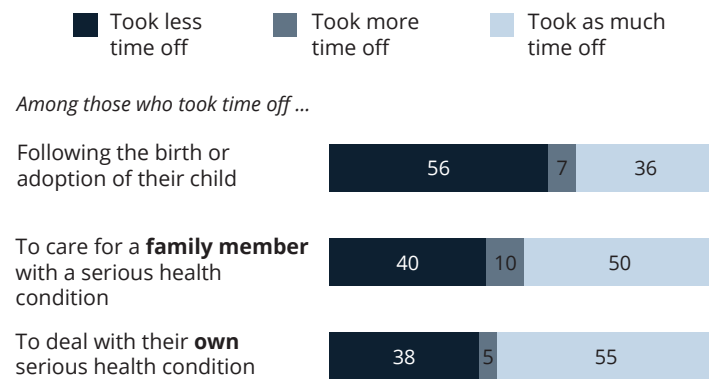
Despite high-profile examples of corporate family leave policies, designated paid family leave benefits remain relatively rare. Recent statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor found that 15 percent of the country's workforce have access to a paid family leave benefit through their employer.<sup>24</sup> Blue-collar jobs — manufacturing, farming, construction and service industry jobs such as housekeeping and customer service — are the least likely to provide any paid family leave. Likewise, workers in lower-skill jobs in restaurant and tourism lack the bargaining power to secure benefits like paid leave.

Between 2011 and 2015, the Department of Labor found that less than 10 percent of blue-collar workers are ensured paid family time off. Although most employees do receive other forms of paid time off such as vacation days, sick days or consolidated paid time off packages, which could be utilized for family care, these programs typically afford little

more than a few weeks a year.<sup>25</sup> If workers use sick and vacation time for caregiving, then little time remains for another worthy purpose: rest. Further, seasonal, freelance and self-employed workers fall outside the employee-employer benefits framework altogether and must simply save up to cover time away from work.

## Just over half of parental-leave takers say they took less time off from work than they needed or wanted to

% of leave takers saying they \_\_\_\_\_ than they needed or wanted to



Source: Pew Research Center; Survey of U.S. adults who took or needed/wanted to take leave conducted Nov. 17-Dec. 14, 2016

A Pew Research Center survey found that one-third of Americans with incomes under \$30,000 were unable to take leave when they needed to in the past two years for either family care or personal medical reasons.<sup>26</sup> Only 37 percent of those with incomes under \$30,000 received any type of pay. Nearly half of those households with incomes under \$30,000 who lacked paid family leave said they went on public assistance to cover lost wages. Others indicated that they took on debt to dedicate time to caregiving, and some cut their leave short.<sup>27</sup>

Without buffers such as family-supportive workplace benefits, the demands of work can encroach upon family life, limiting the time that members spend with one another even at the tenderest seasons of caregiving such as the birth of a child. The pressure to cut short important caregiving

and bonding time significantly affects individual families as well as the institution of the family. The loss of freedom and agency to create space for quality family time — alongside the more commonly cited pressures on families such as changing cultural norms, economic instability and disconnection from support networks — likely contributes to family fragility. In the words of author Rodney Clapp, “Family holds an uncertain place in a world formed after the image of the marketplace.”<sup>28</sup> The demands and rhythms of the office, factory or firm can bound and limit family and community life. Families are at risk of becoming collections of producers and consumers fitted more to the demands of the economy than they are to the care of each other.



## // 3. God's Purposes for Family Care, Work, and Rest

Many Americans long for something different than the fragmented family time they experience. The writings of Wendell Berry, for example, have inspired many by harkening back to family farms and rural Amish communities as models of a healthier, more humane way of life.<sup>29</sup> Family farming will not return en masse, nor should we seek to repeat all features of an agrarian past. But we should seek to address the attenuating pressures on families in our contemporary society.

A biblical account of work and family life can ground this effort, reminding us that work and family were each designed for good purposes. God did not intend work and family to be experienced as competing spheres of responsibility, but rather complementary ones. Christians believe that every sphere of life falls under the lordship of Christ and is thus a place of God's blessing and provision. God calls many people to enter into a marriage covenant and to bear and raise children; God also calls many people to work "with willing hands" (Proverbs 31:13) in order to provide for family needs, effect cultural change and take the gospel into the marketplace. Church teaching honors these calls of responsibility.

In our post-Industrial-Revolution culture, work and family are often experienced as two areas of life in constant conflict. If an employee is invested in family life, then he or she risks being seen as a less productive or committed worker; if a parent or caretaker is invested in work outside the home, then he or she is seen as a less committed family member. Against this modern dichotomy of work and domestic life, the historical Christian tradition honors both family life and labor as two God-given spheres of human responsibility that can complement rather than compete with one another.

### **FAMILY**

We start with the family. The family is the smallest yet most foundational unit of human institutions. Every person is born to a mother and father who, by God's grace, raise their child in love, security and spiritual maturity to know and love their Creator. In a family, every member is connected to one another through shared biology, language, traditions, geography, memory and covenant.

The family bond holds for the lifetime of its members and reaches back to generations, ahead to grandchildren, and out to aunts, uncles, cousins and those who are kin by affinity. In most times and places, certainly in the time when the Bible was written, the family was not a collection of a few self-realized individuals, but a vast network of relationships through which every person inherited their ultimate identity and, in Israel and the Church, the promises of God. Jesus dignified the bonds of family by being incarnate as a baby, born to a

// **God did not intend work and family to compete with one another but to complement each other.**





mother and father, by blessing the bonds of marriage at the wedding feast at Cana and by extending the concept of family to the Church, to include anyone who follows his teachings.

The Christian philosopher and theologian Howard Thurman centered family in the midst of the relationship between the individual and community in his book, *The Search for Common Ground*. He observed that, "... in the intimacy of the family the profound process of the unfolding of potential is set in motion."<sup>30</sup> It is within the deeply relational context of the family — in which love and trust flows among and across generations — that a fundamental and beautiful feature of our humanness can grow and flourish. We are made in the image of a triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit create and relate in love to one another. So too, to be fully human, is to create and relate in love to both God and other humans. In their best forms, families model and make visible God's love for each person. For this reason, Pope

Francis calls marriage an "icon of God's love for us."<sup>31</sup>

**"... in the intimacy of the family the profound process of the unfolding of potential is set in motion."**

Howard Thurman

Catholic and Protestant traditions teach that the health of families and of society are bound up with one another; a healthy, functioning society must be comprised of healthy families. This reality means that private and government policies must respect the family as an institution in its own right, not simply as a means to economic, political or cultural ends. Public policy must account for the ways other institutions impact family life positively and negatively, from the earliest stages of family formation through the last stages of elder care.

The care and flourishing of children — among the most vulnerable members of a society — must be given particular attention in our policy formation. In a time when they were overlooked and disregarded, Jesus welcomed children, holding them up as model citizens in his kingdom. Christian communities must likewise protect children and advocate in the public square for their flourishing, including addressing economic forces that deprive children of food, shelter, rest and education and taking into account extended family separation due to parents' work. Children are to be welcomed as gifts from the Creator, not as a hindrance to a life of meaning or economic advancement. They are worthy in and of themselves.

## **WORK**

Likewise, the Christian tradition has much to say about work. From the first pages of Scripture, we learn that humans, God's image bearers and representatives on earth, are called to steward the creation God has set before them. The creation mandate (Genesis 1:28) is humankind's first job assignment: be fruitful and increase in number, and rule over every

living thing. Though we might imagine Eden as only a place of leisure, in fact it was also a place of industry — even before sin entered the world. In Genesis 3, human rebellion against God corrupted human work, making it toilsome and painful. Even still, work in a fallen world can be a source of satisfaction, creativity and meaningful engagement with fellow laborers and society. In the Catholic tradition, work is an inherent source of dignity, and as such must be undertaken responsibly and with proper safeguards against exploitation and abuse. Catholic social teaching warns against the exploitation of the poor by the rich, and of depriving a worker of his or her just wages. In his encyclical “On Human Work,” John Paul II wrote, “Work is a good thing for a man — a good thing for his humanity — because through work man not only transforms nature ... but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes ‘more of a human being.’” Work is essential to what human beings were meant to be and do, and without it we experience lack of meaning and disconnection from our fellow image bearers.



The Protestant Reformation contributed to the church’s theology of work by honoring the work done by laypersons in their daily lives.

Martin Luther taught that all Christians receive a vocation — from the Latin *vocare*, “to call” — from God. He stressed that work done in the world was no less holy or important than work done in the Church. Manual labor such as cleaning a stall, scrubbing the dishes or building a table could be the site of holiness if done with excellence and love for neighbor. Jesus spent most of his life laboring as a carpenter, thus dignifying work done with human hands. Reformed theologians John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli and Abraham Kuyper taught that humans could, in their daily work, participate in God’s redemption of institutions such as law, education and government and thereby contribute to the common good. As Christians seek to apply their faith to daily work, they can sow seeds of truth, goodness and beauty and point to the day when God in Christ will reconcile all things to himself, restoring everything to its original glory.<sup>32</sup>

## REST

God put work in its proper place by setting apart the seventh day of creation for rest. Observing the Sabbath helps us mark specific days and times as holy and set apart for worship. Sabbath reminds us that God alone, not work, is to be worshiped, for God is the ultimate source of our fruitfulness and creativity. Sabbath observance allows individuals



and families to worship, play, eat and rest together in order to be refreshed for their weekly tasks. Laws in the Old Testament commanded God's people to rest not only for themselves, but also so that livestock, land and foreigners in their midst were not overworked.<sup>33</sup> These laws remind us that our work today is embedded in relationships with other image bearers who need rest and refreshment as much as we do. Indeed, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," as Jesus said.<sup>34</sup> Our organizational cultures and consumer habits should honor others' need for rest and family unity. An old Puritan saying declares, "Good Sabbaths make good Christians." We believe they also make good family members.

Like the Sabbath, the seasons of family life remind us of the preciousness and particularity of different times. There is the waiting of prenatal time and the disorientation of life with a newborn who sleeps and cries around the clock. For a season the rhythms of the school day and school year may dominate family life. Later, the long stretches of time when children are absent from home mark the family calendar. Care for an aging parent or loved one with disabilities or a serious illness has its own rhythms: regular medical appointments, scheduling and monitoring medications, anticipating favorite events or programs. The different seasons of life are not an aberration to be ignored, but a feature of God's design for creation to be embraced and lived into.

Christian scripture and tradition offer a vision of family as a critical, God-given institution. Families bear the primary responsibility for sustaining themselves and caring for their most vulnerable members. Thus, Christian families should strive to embody work and family as holistic complements even in the face of economic, social, and cultural pressures that minimize or fragment family time. Christian family members and workplace leaders should attend to and honor work, rest and caregiving and counter messages from culture or commerce that would diminish the particular preciousness of each season of family life.

**An old Puritan saying declares, 'Good Sabbaths make good Christians.' We believe they also make good family members.**

But God did not intend families to thrive on their own. God also calls whole societies to support families and foster the conditions of family flourishing, including enabling and protecting family time.

## // 4. Protecting and Empowering Family Time

To advance family flourishing, civil society and public institutions must work in concert. In this section, we focus specifically on one aspect of civil society — the workplace — as well as public policy. Thoughtful workplace practices and public policies alike can help uphold family responsibility and can help children and other vulnerable persons to thrive. Family-supportive workplaces and public policies can both dignify family care, serving as a cultural reminder of the unique and precious gift of family life. The roles and responsibilities of workplaces and government flow from their God-given callings as well as their respective capacities and limitations.

### WORKPLACES

Christian teaching contains a theology of work. It also affirms the significance of the workplace. Just as workers have a calling, the workplace has a calling as well. Workplaces produce goods and services that benefit customers. As they enlist workers in that creative task, they become the site in which humans live out their vocations. As Michael Naughton, a Catholic scholar of vocation and business, notes, “A community of work is only authentic when it serves those outside it in a way that develops those within it.”<sup>35</sup> A workplace responds to its God-given calling when it treats all of its employees and workers with dignity and respect rather than as mere inputs to a production process.

Respecting workers’ full humanity entails respect for the various seasons of human life. Pope John Paul II’s *Laborem Exercens* (“On Human Work”) describes this imperative. Writing about the particular season and calling to motherhood, Pope John Paul II affirms mothers’ critical role in the care and education of children. That many women are called to motherhood demands more, not less, of workplaces. Employers must not discriminate against or penalize those with caregiving callings lest mothers be pressured to give up their unique parenting role in order to retain employment. Instead, the “whole labour process must be organized and adapted in such a way as to respect the requirements of the person in his or her forms of life...”<sup>36</sup>

Workplaces, particularly Christian organizations, can align family supportive values with workplace practices in a number of ways. They can honor and protect key seasons of family time by, for example, permitting employees to take reasonable leave for the birth of a child or major caregiving event without fear of losing their jobs. They can affirm nondiscrimination in hiring, evaluating and promoting workers who have family responsibilities.

Employers can also use technology to help mend the home-work divide. According to a 2017 report from Global Workplace Analytics, the number of U.S. workers who telecommute,



which is defined as working from home with the aid of the Internet, email and the telephone, has increased 115 percent in the past decade, to about 3.9 million workers, or about three percent of the U.S. workforce. Telecommuting allows workers with small children or aging parents at home to complete work and care for family members in one place. Flex-time — flexibility in when work is completed during the week — also allows parents to adjust their schedules to care for children while completing work remotely. Forty percent of American employers indicate that they allow some workers the ability to work some regular paid hours from home.<sup>37</sup>

HOPE International, a Christian microfinance organization based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, has thoughtfully integrated technology with their missional understanding of work. Chris Horst, HOPE's Vice President of Development, described how he manages a team of 20-plus regional representatives across the country. The development team "meets" regularly via teleconferencing. In this way, technology has allowed the organization to employ the most qualified workers across the country while expanding their development work beyond its central offices. HOPE's flexibility on worker location also helps employees meet family obligations that may occur at various times of the day. HOPE has balanced this development with a commitment to building in-person relationships as well. Horst notes that off-site employees are encouraged to develop collegial relationships and professional networks in their own town so that their work interactions are not just virtual. "There are very few people I've found who can really successfully work from home, without working hard to build some sort of community," says Horst. "There has to be some face to face community."

HOPE is also mindful of the ways that technology can encroach on family time. HOPE's executive team has established a rule to ensure that work completed at home does not infringe on non-work-related home activities. Staff are not supposed to email at night or on Sundays unless

**A workplace responds to its God-given calling when it treats all of its employees and workers with dignity and respect rather than as mere inputs to a production process.**

there is an emergency. If an employee needs to email during those times, they are supposed to explain in the email why they are emailing at that time. "You have to keep technology in its proper place; when it is, everything works better, including work life and family life," explains Horst.

Employers can also in such a way that They can guarantee sick or discretionary sick days for care of a Employers can develop workers to swap shifts in order to attend or parent-teacher percent of employers they allow some off during the workday needs; 47 percent

or most employees.<sup>38</sup> Employers can responsibly integrate part-time work arrangements into the workplace, not for the purpose of lowering labor costs, but to enable individuals to contribute their skills and participate in paid work at a level that leaves time for family care duties.

MORE THAN  
**70%**  
OF COMPANIES FOUND THAT PAID FAMILY LEAVE BOOSTED MORALE AND PRODUCTIVITY.

*Source: Boston Consulting Group, 2017*

structure the flow of work anticipates life events. a certain number of paid days and permit use of child or family member. systems that enable or shift their schedule a doctor's appointment conference. Eighty-one surveyed indicate that workers some paid time for personal or family allow this flexibility to all

The common thread across family-supportive workplace policies is an understanding of family care events and seasons, not as an aberration, but as a fully integrated aspect of an employee's life. Christians believe that family is a central priority, not an afterthought. Anticipating family responsibility is an extension of employing humans.

Research suggests that workplaces with family-supportive policies become more effective workplaces. The Boston Consulting Group, a management consulting firm, found that a generous family leave policy helps retain talented employees after the birth of a child — thus reducing the cost of hiring and training a replacement employee — and is a determining factor for talented hires as they choose a job.<sup>39</sup> More than 70 percent of companies surveyed found that paid family leave boosted morale and productivity. Similarly, the Society for Human Resource Management found that workplace flexibility increased job satisfaction and retention, and decreased occurrences of missed work due to illness, workplace accidents, and distractions from home-based demands.<sup>40</sup> Decreased stress and time to promptly care for illness may lead to lower levels of absenteeism and lower health care costs in the long-term. Workplaces with a sensitivity to family life have much to gain.

## **PUBLIC POLICY**

Alongside civil society, government has a responsibility to protect and support family life as well. Government has a limited but God-given role in promoting human flourishing as



well as establishing and enforcing just rules for society. Given the importance of family to human flourishing and the well-being of whole societies, public policy has a legitimate role in supporting the family.

### **Laws that protect and enable family time**

What does the rightful role of government relative to family look like? Reformed theology has argued that government should protect the integrity of the diverse and distinct activities, or spheres, of human life. No sphere of society should become subordinated to another. The commercial sphere should not become a tool of the state, nor should educational institutions. Likewise, family life should not become an instrument of the state or of commerce. Reformed theologians like Abraham Kuyper largely conceptualized these different aspects of life using spatial metaphors. However, this vision can also encompass the variations of time that make up human flourishing.<sup>41</sup> Time devoted to work, time devoted to caregiving and time devoted to rest are all worthy parts of human life. Just as government is called to protect varied spheres of human life, it should also protect distinct times such as critical seasons of family life.

Catholic social teaching also calls for protected time in its affirmation of a worker's right to rest. God commands Christians to desist from working on the Sabbath. Times of rest allow for charitable activity, family time and attending to those who are sick or elderly. Because of the significance of rest, both private employers and the government are called upon to protect rest. "Public authorities have the duty to ensure that, for reasons of economic productivity, citizens are not denied time for rest and divine worship."<sup>42</sup>

American law has historically played a role in ordering and protecting time. Most colonies and later, states, had laws that prohibited certain commercial activities on Sundays. Sunday Closing Laws were rooted in the Christian observance of the Sabbath but had a broader cultural effect, establishing "a common day in the community for rest and leisure."<sup>43</sup>

In 1938, Congress enacted the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which required employers to provide an overtime premium for non-salaried time worked in excess of 40 hours a week. Legal scholar Todd Rakoff argues that the FLSA is a rule about both wages and time.<sup>44</sup> Even though many workers work overtime and receive an overtime premium, the FLSA helped solidify the 40-hour workweek as a cultural norm. When this norm holds, a sizeable segment of workers and families can organize and coordinate their time in expectation of a five-day workweek and eight-hour day.<sup>45</sup>

A society-wide day of rest may no longer suit our diverse, fast-paced society. However, the concept that the law can contribute to healthy norms of work and non-work applies to the contemporary challenge of enabling both family and work time. We may find common ground, for example, in the understanding that each household deserves some time away from work in order to attend to family.

Like Sunday Closing laws and the FLSA, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), enacted in 1993, is also a law about time — one that explicitly protects family time. The FMLA stipulates that certain employers may not fire a worker for taking 12 weeks of unpaid time off to care for a newly born or adopted child or to attend to a family member's medical needs. It also protects workers who take time off from work to address their own sickness or disability. The congressional statement of purpose that precedes the law's provisions acknowledges that one of its purposes is "to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity." The FMLA protects families by protecting their time.

### **Measuring the gaps: some family time remains unprotected**

The broad purposes and approach of the FMLA are consistent with government's responsibility to protect family by establishing boundaries between the workplace and the family. But growing evidence suggests that the FMLA, though helpful, is insufficient to protect family time. Consider the time needed to care for a newborn or newly adopted child. As previously mentioned, about a fifth of new mothers take only a few days or weeks off after giving birth. Many parents take less time than they would like to. The average time a working mother remains home after giving birth, according to the National Center for Health Care Statistics, is 10 weeks. Child and maternal health experts say mothers should have a minimum of 12 weeks of dedicated time with an infant. Some recommend up to a year.<sup>46</sup>

A combination of legal gaps and economic barriers contribute to America's track record with respect to family time. Only half of young working mothers qualify for job protection under the FMLA. Those without FMLA coverage may work for an employer that falls below the law's threshold of 50 employees, may lack the job tenure to qualify for protection, or function as a contingent or self-employed worker.<sup>47</sup> Nationally, only about 60 percent of workers enjoy legal protection under the FMLA.<sup>48</sup>

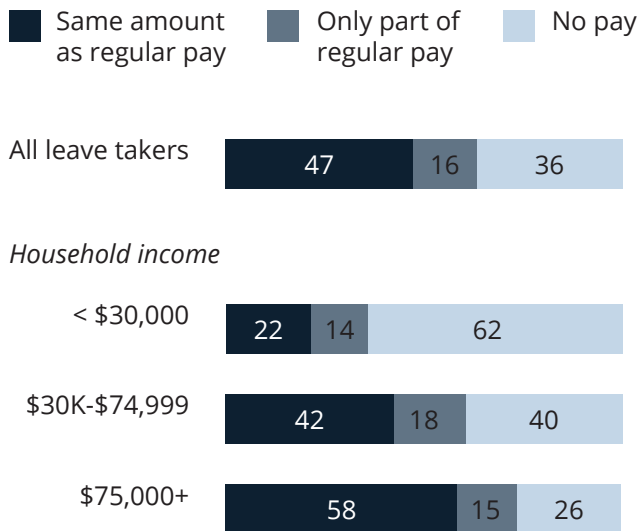
Many workers, even those covered by FMLA, lack the financial capacity to take more than a few weeks off of work without a paycheck or other wage replacement. Fewer than 20 percent of the workforce receives paid family leave. Some workers receive pay from a short-term disability insurance policy or accumulated sick or vacation time but for a modest length of time. The remainder must rely on their own savings or a second family income while they are on leave. A worker earning a median income in America would forgo more than \$13,000 in wages in order to take 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for an infant or sick family member.<sup>49</sup> Fewer than half of American adults have an emergency savings or rainy day fund that would cover three months of expenses.<sup>50</sup>

Households with limited wealth and income face compounding economic barriers to family time. As noted, lower-wage workers are far less likely to enjoy any significant paid time off benefit, such as paid family leave, sick days, vacation days or short-term disability insurance, through their work than professional workers.<sup>51</sup> Many also lack access to savings,

investments or family wealth that could be tapped to self-fund a maternity or paternity leave. Notably, African American and Latino workers are both less likely to hold jobs that receive benefits and less likely to have gathered enough assets to weather less income during family leave. Disproportionate access to family-time buffers like paid family leave, along with the racial wealth gap, combine to exacerbate racial injustice and inequity across generations.

**Leave takers with lower incomes are the least likely to say they received at least some pay**

*% of leave takers who say they received \_\_\_ when they took time off from work for parental, family or medical reasons*



Source: Pew Research Center; Survey of U.S. adults who took or needed/wanted to take leave conducted Nov. 17-Dec. 14, 2016

**A system of paid family leave that supports all families' time**

The government responds well to its calling when it protects families and supports members of society in their family responsibilities. Government's support and protection of the family should extend to all families. Each and every family is foundational to society. Each family helps uphold the sanctity of life of its members and helps nurture the next generation of citizens, workers and family members. Each person has the opportunity and responsibility to manifest God's love through family life.

By developing a system of paid family leave, policy-makers can enable family time for many households that struggle to protect time to care. A system of paid family leave can help ensure that all who work can also attend to family responsibilities.

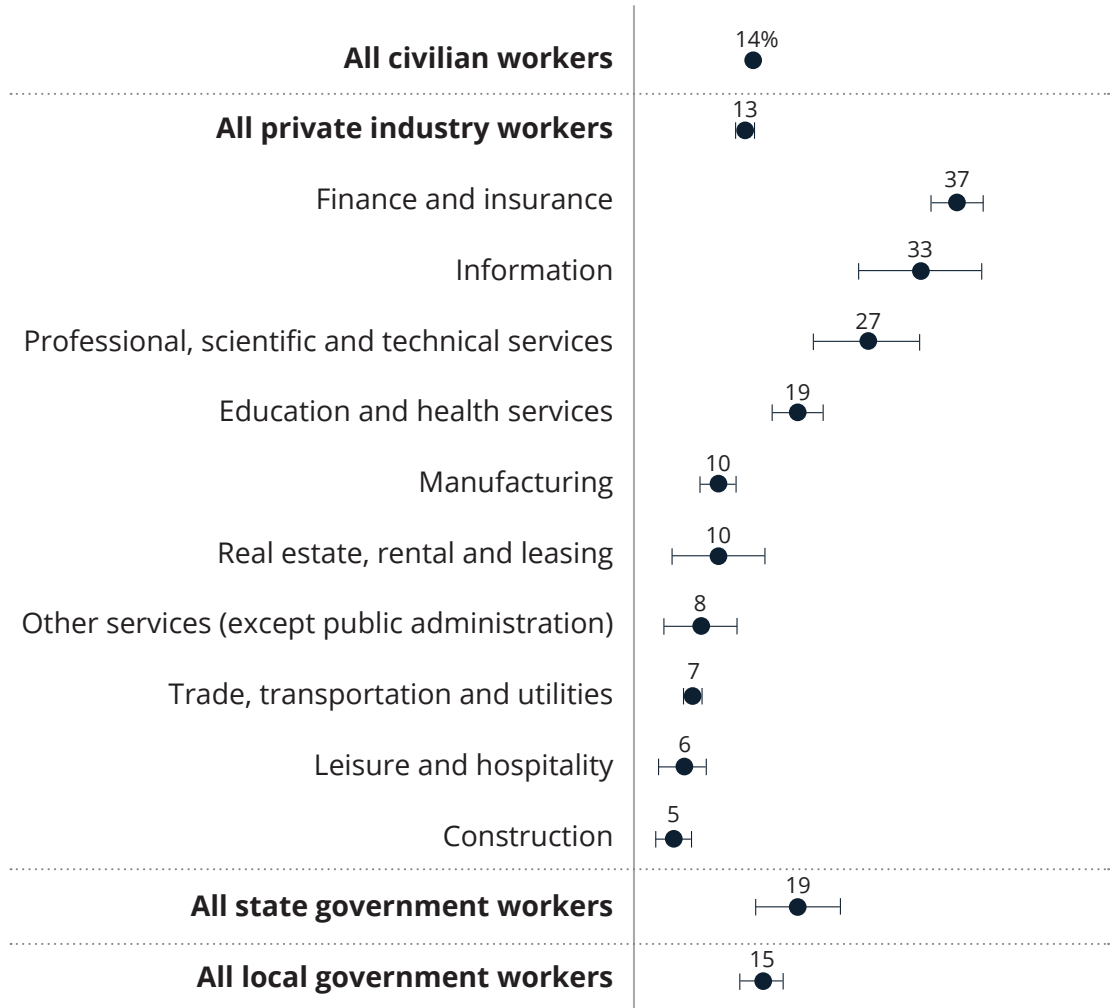
Several developments at the state and federal level help illuminate how a system of paid family leave would work and how it would bolster family time and welfare. In 2004, California legislators developed a statewide system to provide paid family leave to a larger share of the state's workforce. Since then, four

other states and the District of Columbia have developed similar paid family leave programs. These state programs, funded largely by employee payroll contributions, provide eligible workers with a wage replacement benefit for six to twelve weeks of family leave.<sup>52</sup>

In the summer of 2017, scholars and economists from both the right and left sides of the ideological spectrum examined the prospects for a national system of paid family leave.

## Getting paid family leave depends on the workplace

% of workers with access to paid family leave, by industry, 2016




Source: Pew Research Center; National Compensation Survey, BLS.

The working group, convened by the American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institution, recommended a system of earned benefits and shared contribution by all who work. A public system of paid family leave, working group members agreed, would build upon and complement the benefits offered by private employers while ensuring that all workers receive at least eight weeks of paid parental leave. To further ensure that all families can take time to care for a new child, the group recommended extending the FMLA's job protections to more workers. Parents should not fear loss of a job because they take time off to care for a child, the working group concluded.<sup>53</sup>

California, the state with the longest-running paid family leave program, illustrates how paid family leave enables family time. After implementing a system of paid family leave, the





// **A worker earning median income in America would forgo more than \$13,000 in wages in order to take 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for an infant or sick family member.**



length of time mothers spent with new children doubled, increasing the average maternity leave from three to six weeks.<sup>54</sup> Whereas unpaid parental leave programs may expand leave for higher-earning parents, California's paid leave program significantly increased family leave for less educated and low-income mothers.<sup>55</sup>

The data on California's experience demonstrates that paid family leave enables family time at crucial moments such as birth, adoption or other major caregiving events. This benefits parents and children alike. Researchers link parental leave with lower rates of infant and child mortality, a reduction in low birth weight rates among babies, and increased breastfeeding.<sup>56</sup> Fathers with access to paternity leave demonstrate, on average, greater involvement in child care.<sup>57</sup> Mothers who take sufficient parental leave enjoy better mental and physical health.<sup>58</sup> Given the fundamental role of family in God's design for creation, it should be no surprise that enabling family time yields abundant benefits. When people are empowered to fulfill their caregiving responsibilities, individuals and families flourish.

California's paid family leave system and the AEI-Brookings recommendations are also designed to promote family leave while minimizing burdens on employers. Rather

than mandating that employers provide and fund paid family leave benefits, state or federal governments can fund family leave through an employee payroll contribution or savings elsewhere in public budgets. As the AEI-Brookings group noted, such a system protects workers in seasons of economic need while lowering the financial burden on employers. This protects smaller

employers and reduces employer incentives to discriminate against workers with caregiving responsibilities.<sup>59</sup>



Policy-makers can also design paid family leave programs in ways that avoid creating cycles of dependence. Paid family leave is a benefit limited by time and purpose rather than a long-term source of income. The evidence suggests that paid family leave actually improves employees' attachment to work rather than discouraging work. Women who have access to paid leave are more likely to take time off of work following the birth or adoption of a child.

They are also more likely to return to work after maternity leave.<sup>60</sup> As demonstrated by the biblical ethic of Sabbath-keeping, setting limits on work and putting work in its rightful place in our culture can also serve to ennoble work.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKPLACES AND POLICY-MAKERS**

When all parts of a society work to advance human flourishing, the process resembles a symphony orchestra in concert. Each section and instrument has a unique, complementary part to play.<sup>61</sup> To advance family flourishing, families as well as workplaces, civil society and government must each find and perfect their part. Based on our review of the roles and possibilities for workplaces, civil society, and government, we recommend the following broad roles for each. A more detailed set of principles for private and public policy development are listed in the appendix to this report.

### **► Workplaces and public policy alike should protect workers' time to care for family members.**

Workplaces can and should observe the worker protections provided by the Family Medical Leave Act regardless of the size of the workplace, allowing workers to dedicate time to family care. Workplaces should not discriminate against workers with family responsibilities in hiring and firing decisions or when providing opportunities or promotions. Workplaces can also adopt an array of policies to protect workers' time to care. They can avoid around-the-clock work and enable flexible work arrangements where appropriate.

Many family-supportive practices are best designed and implemented at the level of the workplace. Organizations can fashion systems and trainings in light of the particular opportunities and constraints of their workplace and industry. But some of what is needed to "humanize the workplace" may exceed what individual organizations can reasonably achieve. Other institutions must pitch in as well so that all workers are respected and empowered in their family responsibilities. Employers might collaborate with other civil society organizations to provide models, training and opportunities; they might cooperate with government in the provision of lifecycle benefits like paid family leave.

### **► Workplaces, especially faith-based organizations should align family-supportive values and workplace practices.**

Faith-based employers whose teachings explicitly value family life should be among the first to formalize and adopt policies that enable workers to balance family responsibilities alongside workplaces duties. For Christian organizations and Christians in organizational leadership positions, sacred wisdom about family, work and rest can inform creative workplace policies and practices. In so doing, faith-based organizations can model their commitment to family, family caregiving and the sanctity of life at its early and most vulnerable stages.

► **Policy-makers should develop a system of paid family leave so that all workers can attend to seasons of family responsibility.**

Currently, too many workers face economic pressure to substitute family time for work time, even at critical moments such as the birth or adoption of a child. Despite growing interest in paid family leave, many employers do not offer this benefit to workers nor experience significant incentives to do so. Some employers — including smaller organizations, faith-based organizations and nonprofits — may have the desire to cover worker wages during family leave but lack the financial capacity to do so.

To make the promise of protected family time a reality, a system of paid family leave should enable a time-limited wage-replacement for workers during seasons of family care. Such a system models the society-wide significance of family time and the dignity of work, ensuring that all workers have time for family care, not just those working in select industries, positions or workplaces.

## // Conclusion

Major cultural and economic shifts of the past century have placed undue stress on families. Ironically, the conditions that threaten family cohesion make family's humanizing purpose all the more necessary. Wendell Berry describes the significance of family in contrast to anonymizing forces of contemporary mass society and globalized economy this way: "It is only in these bonds [of family] that our individuality has a use and a worth; it is only to the people who know us, love us, and depend on us that we are indispensable as the persons we uniquely are."<sup>62</sup>

Though the contexts of family life change over time, each generation should strive to promote the conditions of family flourishing. These conditions include cultural and moral norms that support marriage and fidelity, family economic sustainability, time for family life, and community support for families. Christians who recognize the socially foundational nature of family must not only talk about the importance of the family, but enact policies and create cultures that tangibly demonstrate the importance of the family. Our deeply held values should lead to concrete action in our generation.

In our fast-paced culture, time is a precious resource. If we want to empower families to thrive, we must allow families to dedicate and organize time in order to care for one another and establish family cohesion. Protecting and enabling family time at crucial touchpoints — birth, adoption, illness or death — helps anchor and signal the enduring value of the family in an atomized, lonely culture.



In societies that honor family, family members should be supported in their commitments to one another. Parents should be able to establish a secure bond with their child in the precious weeks after birth without facing loss of pay or retaliation on the job. More broadly, public policies and private institutions should enable families to follow the cycles of work, rest and caregiving that make for human flourishing and family cohesion. Faith-based organizations, Christian workplace leaders and citizens should create and promote family-honoring cultures and policies that honor the dignity of life from beginning to the very end.

## // Principles for Family-Supportive Policies

Many choices remain for those seeking to design and implement family-supportive policies in each sphere. The Center for Public Justice offers these principles that can serve as guideposts in the design of both public policy and workplace practices.

**Affirming that family life is foundational.** Families are a foundational social institution, deserving of respect, protection and support for their own sake and the health of society. To support flourishing family life, workplaces and public policies should protect and enable crucial family time, not as a matter of charity but because of the foundational role of family.

**Honoring work and all those who work.** Policies that are designed to protect and enable family time and rest should reach all kinds of work and workers. Access to family-supportive benefits and protections should apply regardless of wage level or profession and with consideration of the many forms of work: seasonal, contingent, part and full time.

**Providing effective support to families.** Workplace and public policies should seek to effectively support families. With respect to family leave, public policy-makers should develop programs that truly enable workers to take leave and take leave for a sufficient time. The health needs of young children and parents, vulnerable persons and caregivers, should inform the length and scope of family leave.

**Addressing systemic barriers to family stability.** Christian tradition calls for special attention to those who are poor and disadvantaged including those who lack the economic clout to protect family time. Workplaces and policy-makers should consider the compounding barriers that limit many households' family time. These include historic wage and asset gaps and the fact that many lower-wage jobs provide few to no family-supportive benefits. Policies that ensure higher wage replacement for low-income households help narrow this gap and protect family time for all households.

**Preserving nonprofit, religious and small business organizations' ability to flourish.**

Policy-makers should attend to the challenges facing smaller institutions — both in terms of cost and capacity. Public policy should avoid over-burdening small employers and provide capacity-building resources where appropriate.

**Honoring the family responsibilities of both men and women.** Both men and women are essential to the development of children and care of family. Workplaces and public policies can affirm the family responsibilities of both men and women while offering flexibility in the way that men and women provide family care. Birth mothers, for example, may need intensive time with a new child and time to recover from childbirth; new fathers should receive equal amount of time provided at intervals appropriate to their caregiving role.

**Honoring both marketplace and caregiving work.** Some families decide that one parent should stay home or limit their work during seasons of significant caregiving. Policy makers should ensure that parents who choose to remain home do not lose out on critical support given to other households. Workplaces should welcome the gifts of employees returning to the workforce after periods of unpaid family care.

**Stewarding resources well.** Policy-makers should steward public resources well, balancing family-supportive programs with consideration of the cost of those programs and a fair distribution of those costs. Employers should consider the cost of family-supportive policies in relation to short-term mission and long-term impact of integrating values and operations.

## // Authors' Acknowledgments

In researching this report, we wanted to press past the typical buzzwords about work-family balance and the diagnoses that consider work-family imbalance as either a private, household issue or a public one. Instead, we sought a wide-angle perspective, considering Christian theology, social science, policy and families' lived experiences. We are tremendously grateful for the many advisers and experts who helped us undertake this approach. They include those who shared their experiences with us in formal interviews and informal conversations, those who reviewed the report, and those who provided feedback on specific components: Hannah Anderson, Vilma "Nina" Balmaceda, Stephanie Boddie, Charles Camosy, Anyra Cano, Stanley Carlson-Thies, Denise Daniels, Christina Edmondson, Brad Frey, Justin Giboney, Chris Horst, Dhan Khatiwoda, Michelle Kirtley, Kristin Kobes Du Mez, Adeng Leek, Dallas Leneer, Susan Leon, Nicole Massie Martin, Jenny Mullins, Branson Parler, Jacqueline Rivers, Kelly Rosati, Yvette Santana, Chris Schutte, Alma Stanley, Kim Sturgeon and Cory Willson.

We're particularly appreciative of Bethany Christian Services in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for hosting a community voices roundtable, as well as sociology students at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, who interviewed community members to inform this report. The staff of Neighborhood Ministries in Phoenix, Arizona were also generous in sharing about their work supporting parents through their Mom's Place program, now named Parenting por Vida. We are tremendously grateful to the many contributors and interviewees whose comments provided wisdom for this piece and will inform CPJ's future work.

Finally, a warm thank you to colleagues and interns at the Center for Public Justice whose thoughtful comments and careful editing improved this report at each step: Emily Fromke, Meg Biallas Henry, Chelsea Langston Bombino, Chelsea Maxwell, Stephanie Summers and Katie Thompson.

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