

Why We Do What We Do The Way We Do What We Do: Intergenerational Church

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- [0 : 00] As previously mentioned, this is a bit of an abnormal Sunday morning in that we actually won't spend much time in Ephesians chapter 6 or any other particular text.
- ! So, we're going to talk about how it is that God intends for children to be trained, and we're having to apply our thoughts for our culture and draw out then how it is we should best do this thing.
- So, we'll look, and we'll look at some of the clear commands to parents to train up their children, the fear and admonition of the Lord, and then we'll talk about how and the why of what we're doing here.
- I'd fit this sermon into a category of sermons that we kind of do periodically, why we do what we do and why we do what we do the way we do what we do, which sounds funny to hear.
- It's even funnier to type it out, so if you ever are at your computer and you need a laugh, type that sentence, why we do what we do and why we do what we do the way we do what we do.
- [1 : 24] And I think it's timely. There's just times we need to stop and pause and think together about how it is that we arrange ourselves as a church, work within the gray areas of the commands of God for church, put some clear boundaries on what we should do together as a church, but then how do we carry all of it out together.
- Certainly, our fellowship is odd in a lot of ways, and there are going to be guests amongst us who will come and go, what in the world? And at very least, we need to have these kinds of conversations so that you can say, well, let me explain to you why we do what we do and why we do what we do the way we do what we do.
- You need to be able, for the sake of guests or those that you might invite to prime them so you become part of the messaging of our church.
- We also find that some parents in our church may need some help in the process of training children, children, and it certainly could be helpful to have convictions renewed, to again remember the why of it.
- Oh yeah, it's so good, the why, which fuels us to work on the how of it. Some may need just some practical help, just some things that have been learned across the years as a congregation of having children meet with us in our services together.
- [3 : 03] And I think that some of the non-parents in the room, so I think this time together shouldn't be lost on those without children.
- It's not just necessarily for you thinking about having children someday, but that you would consider how it is you ought to participate as we work together as a people to raise children.
- God has saved people, not just you. Certainly I hope that's true of you, that He has in fact saved you.

But more than that, the higher thought is that as Jesus hung on the cross and received the wrath of God, He was receiving the wrath of God for the sins of the church.

He called out a people for His possession. And therefore, when we come together with the church, we shouldn't be only thinking about our interests.

[4 : 06] We should be looking instead to the interests of others and considering how it is that we can serve others, preferring them over ourselves.

And so there's things I think this morning that need to be said that are going to be beneficial for all of us as we work together to be an intergenerational church.

And let me explain why that word, what a word it is. Very often our church gets framed as a family-integrated church.

And I shy away from that term, and I hear many of you still use the term family-integrated, which very often simply means kids are in the service. And that's usually how you're using it when you do that.

However, I prefer that we not use that term because of what often gets connected with that. In fact, there are many who would suggest that if you do not have children in your main gathering with you, that you're in sin, the church is not doing church as God intended the church to be done.

[5 : 13] And I will tell you right now that we don't hold that view. We're not looking down our noses at every other church in our area that may have something provided for children during the main gathering and saying, not a biblical church.

We're not doing that. And some that would call themselves family-integrated, not all, but some do in fact do that. And so I think that's a thing we want to be careful of.

We have had guests, families, guests here that feel that way after leaving. They say, we can't do this thing, and we don't appreciate that you're telling us we're wrong to go to any other church.

And I go, we didn't say that. Well, some of you have, in essence, said that to these families. So we want to be really, really clear about that, right?

We are trying to apply biblical wisdom in the way we meet. You'll hear me say often, this seems like the best thing right now to help us follow the commands of God.

[6 : 12] I don't think it's the only way to accomplish this. I also decided not to use the term multi-generational, and many of you might think that'd be an easier word to use.

But as I think about educational disciplines, when you bring together multiple disciplines to accomplish a goal, this is often called multidisciplinary work.

But each person has their own expertise, and they come and they offer their expertise to solve a solution. Intergenerational communicates something a little bit different. Interdisciplinary work means that certainly some people may have an expertise, but they come together and they learn each other's expertises in order to solve a problem.

It has a much more together feel to it. And so, we are a faith family. We're meant to be working to that kind of degree of relationship, right?

That we pick up and bear each other's burdens and offer support and help in that way, which is why I prefer the term intergenerational.

[7 : 24] And so, as we talk about being an intergenerational church, it doesn't just mean that kids are in the service with us. It means that we're a gathering of believers that love and care for all generations, right?

Titus chapter 2 ministry, right? Older men and older women ministering to younger men and younger women. Because we believe that all generations add to the vitality of the church, right?

That we need one another in walking out the Christian faith. You have heard me say, and maybe I'm unintentionally becoming known for saying, if you always hang out with your idiot friends, you'll always be an idiot.

And I don't mean to insult your friends, right? But if you find yourself in a demographic box, you don't get the shared experience of people outside of that particular demographic.

And so, we need one another, right? I need parents who have gone before me as an example, right? Both the lessons that they learned in how not to do things, as well as how to do things.

[8 : 38] I need people I can ask questions of. I need the zeal of young people in our church, right? It is very easy for me to get comfortable.

Man, I love having a bunch of young people who are ready to go take on the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I need to be spurred on in that way.

These are just some examples of how it is we come together as an intergenerational church, seeking to honor God with all that we do together.

One aspect of that, one aspect, and it seems to be a prominent aspect, it's certainly the most contested application of that thinking, is that we encourage congregants to bring their children to sit with us in the congregational gathering.

This is certainly not without its pains, right? We do have our moments, don't we? I've said to you before, of all people, I'm preaching and trying to keep a train of thought, that when there's the outburst, I'm with you in that.

[9 : 49] We push through and we press on. And we do so because there's something that undergirds this type of thinking. There's a reason that we are gathering together in this way.

Let me again say, we do not assert that it is wrong to age segregate. We have, I talked about it earlier this morning, a time on Sunday evenings where we're going to do that very thing.

We're going to have some stuff for kids, and we're going to have some stuff for adults. Certainly there's times where it's good for us to gender segregate, let the women get together and talk about things that guys don't want to hear about, and vice versa for the ladies.

There are moments for this. And certainly a church can. I think it's possible. I just think it's difficult in our age. Have programs provided for children and still encourage and support and find parents living out their God-given responsibility to train up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

I do think this is possible. We just see that we live in a culture that's so highly specialized that parents are so quick, so ready to give away their responsibilities to the quote-unquote professionals.

[11 : 06] So often with schools, with coaches. And we see this very thing happen in the church as well. We, without intention, often in our culture, reduce parents to merely being chauffeurs, just getting kids to the place that they're meant to be, where the highly trained professional can help them.

And the Bible doesn't speak in these terms, beloved. The Bible never commands the church to raise children. The Bible never commands a particular parachurch ministry to raise children.

The Bible commands parents to raise children. And so you can take comfort as a parent that this command has been given to you and therefore the grace necessary to fulfill it will be also given to you.

And you don't have to give away this responsibility to another. And so that's what we're hoping to accomplish. We're hoping to very clearly place that responsibility on the shoulders of parents and then do all kinds of things, which we'll talk about in a bit, to support that work, right?

To say, this is a heavy load and we want to bear it with you. But it is your load. In the great day of judgment, I'll be held accountable for all kinds of things that I do and say and feel.

[12 : 32] Certainly my leadership of many of you. But I don't believe that I'm going to be held accountable for the children of our church. I think that accountability is going to be yours. My part in that is how have I helped you pastor your kids in your home?

And that's why we want to be careful about how we do this very thing. So CFC as an intergenerational church believe it's a parent's full responsibility, full responsibility to train children and teach them how to worship and learn about God.

So quickly, let's look at Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 4. And I'll look at a couple of other passages as well. Right after a command for children to obey their parents, in verse 4, Paul says, Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

So it's commanded here, right? And a few other places. Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verse 7. You shall teach the commandments of God diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

There's a general application of wisdom given to us from Proverbs chapter 22 and verse 6. Train up a child in the way he should go. Even when he is old, he will not depart from it.

[14 : 12] And so we have these very clear commands to us as parents to train our children. It's our responsibility to educate.

Parents, even if someone else is doing that, if your child is in public school, for example, you are responsible for what they are learning. You need to be aware of their curriculum.

You need to be asking them many tough questions. And oh, the discernment our young people need as they're in public education. We have to labor in this because the labor has been given to us.

Non-parents, we want to support the parents in our church. We want to do everything that we can to help them pick up this mighty task that has been given to the parents of our church.

The 19th century English Baptist pastor, you guys know I love, Charles Spurgeon, who was a big proponent of Sunday school, which was four children at its inception, once said, let no Christians fall into the delusion that Sunday school is intended to ease them of their parental duties.

[15 : 30] The first and most natural condition of things is for Christian parents to train up their own children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And so anything that we do together as a church or a relationship you might even develop with the child that is not your own ought to be done in support of that work of parents with their kids.

That's why I pray on Sunday morning with the kids from Lethia Way. We ask that what we do here and what these children's parents do with them day in and day out in their homes turn them to repentance and to faith.

We merely want to come alongside, right? Because it is biblical for parents to bear the responsibility for child training.

Our children need to be taught the things of God and they need to be taught that they stand in this world underneath the authority of God and under your authority as parents.

This is so incredibly important for them that they see what good, loving, kind authority looks like in their lives, right? Corrected and trained for their good.

[16 : 51] We talk all the time with our boys about disciplinary action after the fact, after one of them has bent over a knee and they have gone and thought about what they did.

We ask, why is it important to obey your parents? And the answer that we are always prodding along is because God who loves them gave us to them and we love them.

We love you. That's why you need to obey. Our children should be learning this through our parenting, right? Beyond just the specifics of what we teach, they need to be learning that the world functions with authority, right?

God first and foremost and then subservient authorities under that. A great problem with our society today is that there are so many who function as if there is no authority and there is no consequence for anything that they do.

And boy, are they grossly awoken when consequences do in fact arise, right? There is authority placed over us. We are not completely free to do whatever we would do.

[17 : 57] Praise the Lord, right? He governs over us. He keeps us safe. He restrains our wickedness by these things. And our children need to learn this.

So, it's biblical for parents to bear the responsibility for child training. Children need to learn authority. They need to be also trained to learn.

This is not a thing that children pick up immediately. I think we might have in our congregation some kindergarten teachers, if not some that are in those early years.

And they know that one of the major works that's done when a child is already five and six years old in the public school system is to get them to sit still and to be quiet and to pay attention.

They should learn this much before that happens, right? Long before. They waste almost a year of that education just learning to learn.

[19 : 02] We are meant as parents, right? To instruct, to show them how it is they're meant to act later in life.

Sam and I remind each other often that we're not raising boys. We're raising men, right? We're starting with the end in mind. Who do we want these young boys to become?

And oh, the many years of work it will take to get them to that place. And now as my oldest is eight, I see those years fleeting. They're going by so very quick.

There is so much work to be done with our children. We primarily want our children to learn, to learn, because we want them to learn the things of God, right?

That they would understand who God is and His righteous requirement of them. That they would see their absolute inability to keep His good commands.

[20 : 02] And that they would flee to Christ by repentance and faith. We want our children to be able to listen to and understand the instruction of the Bible.

Romans 10.17 says that faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ. Children and others, or parents and others, if we care about the children of our church, we should care that they're being trained to learn.

To learn the things that matter most in their lives. We want the Word of God to be accompanied by the Spirit of God that our children would believe.

Spurgeon, again, says, it is not your instruction that can save the souls of your children. It is the blessing of the Holy Spirit accompanying your labors. So parents, we get in there and we work, we teach, we teach, we teach, we teach, we teach and we pray that God would save our kids.

Our efforts are so incredibly feeble. But we can take heart that the lives of our children lay not in our hands, but in the hands of our good and faithful Father.

[21 : 21] See, I can press on. That's no problem. So children need to be trained to learn. Children also need to be trained to be part of a church.

By sending children to a different room to be separated from the quote-unquote adult service, they learn that whatever is taking place in the church gathering is not meant for them.

If little ones are starting off in circumstances that make it seem like they are not valued in the church, when does that thinking change?

When are they taught that it is simply not true? We value you when you turn five. The things of God are going to be made available to you when you turn three, whatever that may be.

When do we begin helping our kids understand that what we do together as a church is valuable, which means it's valuable for all of us? in many churches, the youth have their own service.

[22 : 32] If you're a teenager, you're pulled out of the quote-unquote adult service, which are often just an extension of children's church. The kids haven't learned, right, how to sit and to listen and to appreciate the things of God.

And in many churches, the adult service has become little more than an extension of the youth service. It's centered on entertainment, wrapped up in emotion because these adults have never been taught to grow up.

Our Christian culture is failing to train, so we have many spiritual adolescents and adults of our day.

This is a tragic thing kids need to learn. Some of you probably came here and at the outset thought, this is kind of boring. You're likely a result of the culture that entertained you and entertained you and entertained you.

And while we want people to really enjoy when we gather together, we're not being boring by design. I want you to know that it is also okay with us as a church if what we do is a bit boring to the nominal Christian who comes in and says, I just don't feel entertained.

[23 : 52] The plea to them is, well then grow up. We're talking about the things of God. We're singing and praying and opening up the scripture together. So you see how we can as a church start early and I hope turn the tide of this young generation.

We want to raise, as the Puritans would say, churchmen. I want my boys to understand the great value of the congregation gathering together and doing deep and weighty things to the glory of God.

So children need to be trained to be a part of the church. Children need to be trained for self-control. people. And we have had just so many, and so many parents that I would say are great parents come and say, we just can't do it.

We just can't do it. It is not unreasonable to expect a child to be able to learn, learn, to process, to sit through an entire sermon.

It is not unreasonable. If we believe an hour's worth of good behavior is too much to ask of our children, then we are fiercely underestimating our children.

[25 : 15] If you begin to actually throw some effort into training your kids, you will be astounded at what they can accomplish. I'm going to use as an example, and we are not a perfect example.

My wife, I think with fair success, pulls it off each week for the last eight years with no help from me. If you have both a mom and a dad sitting with your kids, you are at a great advantage to my family, and yet somehow from age two, and we can even back up, Silas was much younger, they are able to sit and do that work, and it is not because our kids are just good tempered.

They are not. I have wonderful children, but they have had to be trained. They have had to learn how to do what it is they are doing here and in other places as well.

We have to teach them self-control. I am fearful for this generation and their ability to hold jobs because guess what? A lot of life is going to be mundane and boring.

You are going to sit down at a job and do data entry for eight hours a day, but as a child you can't sit still for an hour. Oh, the tragedy that will ensue from such a thing.

[26 : 39] Silas, my two-year-old, is sitting very quietly, at least at this moment. Hey, buddy. And doing quite well. Sam's going, yes, he's doing well.

Don't interrupt. Don't interrupt what he's doing well. But by teaching our children to sit through a church gathering, they're learning a number of important and profitable habits that translate into other areas of their life.

The youngest children amongst us are primarily learning self-control. People say, why are you having the kids in the service? What's the point? Clearly, I'm not going to go and ask Silas later what he learned from the sermon.

He has no idea what I'm talking about. He heard his name and he looked up. That was the extent of it. But he's learning something extremely important which is going to feed into many greater and more important things.

He's learning to sit still now and then he'll begin to learn from sermons as time progresses on. So it does matter. It is helpful and important.

[27 : 48] Our little ones have an absolute, I mean, it is incredible how much energy they have, isn't it? I mean, it is just oozing out of them and they're going to need to learn how to dial it back and to sit down and to be quiet.

Children also gain perspective by being trained to stay for the congregational gathering. They come to understand that not everything revolves around their need for entertainment.

They are learning at a very, very young age to put others before themselves. We have had countless conversations with our children about not being distracting to others because others are here to listen or to sing or to, right?

That what they do affects other people and they should be concerned about that type of thing. from a very early age they're able to begin getting this concept.

Like, this is a huge thing for us to even understand as adults. How much better if we start early? Like, we get the seed planted in them and it begins to grow so they will begin to understand the world does not revolve around you.

[29 : 05] Right? So, doing this takes work. It takes work. Know that sacrifice is required and your patience will probably run out before it gets stronger.

But it's also important to know that as a church we've made a commitment to working this out together that we're here for you. You're not alone in this effort.

We are pleased that if you are here that you are even giving it an effort. Like, that is a wonderful, wonderful thing that you're trying to do this and you need to be encouraged in continuing to try to do this.

And so, in the effort of doing it, let me just give you some practical tips for the how. First, we cherish Sunday mornings.

The most valuable step in training a child to sit through and participate in church gatherings is to cherish church gatherings. Parents, if you don't act like you're happy to be here, your children are going to pick that up.

- [30 : 24] It's a great service to them if you make Sunday the most important day of the week. If you're excited about what we get to do together on Sundays, we sat through a particularly long thing where the boys were expected to be quiet and when we got out from it, Cade noted that it was longer than a church gathering and Judah said it was more boring than a church gathering.

And, of course, for a second my feelings are hurt because I don't really want our gatherings to be boring to my children. It's not what I hope for them, but it gave me an opportunity to talk about why it shouldn't be boring to them.

Oh, it's the greatest thing we do. It's way better than, and I can fill in the multiple blanks of things that my children really enjoy going to go do, but to show them that I think it's the most important thing.

I think it's best. Non-parents, you can help us with this, right? Being attentive, right? Showing up on time, minimizing bathroom breaks, right?

Show the kids around you that what we're doing is important to you, right? I love as much as the next person when a kid is on a parent's shoulder and they're smiling at me. Don't start entertaining them.

- [31 : 47] Smile back and then pay attention, right? That's the thing you can do for them. Stare beyond them to what's happening with us in the room at that time.

Whether you treat being at church as a delight or as a duty, your children will notice. It will make a difference to them and impact their young hearts.

The contemporary pastor, John Piper, suggests that parents should be jealous to model for their children the tremendous value they put on reverence in the presence of Almighty God.

This is a great work. Okay? So we cherish Sunday mornings. We also practice. This is a step that is often overlooked.

Children do not have tests without homework, ideally, and they're not put into a game without first going to practice, ideally, right? You cannot expect that this is the best place to train a child.

- [32 : 48] It just isn't the best place to train a child. We discipline our children differently in our living room than we could in this room.

Now, they could get taken out of this room and disciplined in the same way, but I am much more quick to deliver discipline of the physical form in my living room than I would be here.

I don't think people would appreciate hearing a little outcry and hearing the smack that would follow that, and then the crying that would ensue. This isn't the best place.

And we across the years have encountered a parent that really tries to work it out here, and so there's the noise and the shh and the noise and the shh and the noise and the shh and the noise and the shh and the noise and the shh.

And it's more distracting. And the child's not comprehending what's going on in that space. It's not actually the thing that's most needful, right?

- [33 : 48] What they need is to be trained at home and then brought here, and we'll talk a bit more about placing expectations and consequences on the children at that time. The practice at home is absolutely necessary.

Start small, take steps, best suit your children and their age, and grow in it. So a wonderful suggestion from the Zwimkes.

If you don't know the Zwimkes, I am sorry for that. previous members of our church that are serving in Germany right now, every one of their five girls, Kathleen did what she called blanket time, and she did that largely.

She was training them up to self-discipline, but she did that largely to have the kids in the service, gave them a blanket with quiet toys, and expected them to be quiet, in infancy, to be quiet.

She was able to sit with them and correct them, to be right there and ready to bring correction to help them understand what that looks like. So you could do something like that at home and then bring it here as well.

[34 : 53] You're welcome to put a blanket in the aisle. The fire inspector never shows up on a Sunday morning. So think about things you could implement at home and then bring with you here.

We, with our boys, had a little seat that you strapped a kid into, and we worked at home on helping them learn to be quiet at home, and they sat in a chair here, and it made sense to them.

If I sit here, I can nibble on Cheerios as long as I'm quiet. So you can work on these types of things. You could have other forms of quiet play with older kids, and let me tell you, if you're a parent and you feel like you have no extra time in your day, you are going to love doing this kind of training because it's going to give you time in your day.

We do at our house, I call it book time. The boys know exactly what I'm talking about, and it's usually when my brain's about to explode from the noise in the house, and I've almost always got a book with me that I would love to read, and I sit them on the couch.

They get a big stack of books each, and they sit on the couch. They were doing this before any of them were readers, just looking at pages of books, and I sit in a chair next to them, and I can bring correction, verbal correction, loudly, Judah.

[36 : 04] Judah, we're being quiet right now. You know you're supposed to be quiet. And we worked our time up in that way, so now I expect 45 minutes, and they sit there very quietly for 45 minutes and look at books, and we're working with our two-year-old Silas to join in on that.

I expect it for a while, and then I'll let him off the couch and go do something else, because his poor little body is freaking out. Right? So you need to practice at home, and you need to be appropriate, and you need to work your way up.

It's difficult to expect absolute silence from your children. Please know I don't expect absolute silence from your children, but your children can be taught to control their volume.

Even a little one can learn how to whisper. I use a hand symbol. Instead of shushing, I go like this, and they get it. Because when I go like this, I start talking more quietly.

And it's really incredible how smart they are, and how they can pick that kind of thing up. So you can teach your kids to bring their volume down, so that if they do need something when we're meeting together, they can ask for it appropriately.

[37 : 17] Right? If you need to, sit with your kids, join them on the couch, on the floor, set some time aside in your day to actually show them what it looks like to do the thing you're asking them to do.

Like, don't give them a far-off concept of what it means to sit quietly. Tell them and then show them what it looks like to sit quietly. We periodically have a little share circle in our house, and I teach the kids how to ask nicely and to share, and I'm still doing this with our eight-year-old who now thinks it's the most boring, ridiculous task, but yet hasn't learned how to do it.

And so we model what it looks like. Right? And we're looping now a two-year-old into that process of asking nicely and saying, thank you. And if your brother's not ready to share yet, what do you do?

Right? You don't yell and hit. So our children need this kind of thing modeled out for them. The greatest benefit gained from practicing at home is being able to continually worship as a family throughout the week.

So you can train at home by doing family worship at home. Picking up these important things that we do on Sunday mornings and doing that in your home as well.

[38 : 32] It's a wondrous thing for children to understand that God does not only exist on Sundays. This building isn't somehow holy, the place in which we come and meet with him.

But those who are God's people are God's dwelling place. And so in every day, our kids need to see us as parents excited to talk about him, to share what we know with them.

And I will tell you, parents, if you want to really understand the things of God, try to explain it to a three or four or five-year-old. Try to bring it down to their place.

Meditate on it yourself in that way. I hope sometimes Aletheia Way serves you just because you go, oh, you said that in the simplest of terms. And what a glorious truth that is.

It's a good thing to consider. Okay, we give clear expectations. We give clear expectations. You have to communicate to your children in advance what you expect of them.

[39 : 34] Beloved, adults behave this way. Have you ever had a job where you didn't really know what your boss wanted of you and he never quite seemed happy with you? I've had some of those and I hated it. Just tell me what you expect so I can make you happy and go home thinking I've done my job at the end of the day.

So tell your kids what it is that you expect of them. And there can be variance in that, the expectations you have for your kids. Some parents are going to want their kids to sit perfectly still, attentive, listening to every word that comes out of my mouth.

Some parents are going to let their kids look at books or draw or do mazes or whatever. That is fine. Just let your kids know what it is that you're expecting of them.

Please include in that not being distracting. Right? Not being distracting. Like what we are doing together is weighty. The primary thing we're doing is not helping you train your kids.

The primary thing we're doing is gathering together to be equipped for every good work. So keep that in mind. Alongside of your expectations for them, make sure they know what can be expected when they misbehave.

[40 : 48] As you lay out expectations for their behavior, have clear consequences for disobedience. This is what will happen if you don't obey. Be consistent with your children by always following through with stated consequences.

And this absolutely gets repetitive. It absolutely does. But repetition is a key in training little ones. So you guys all know how I like to alliterate and it seems like everything I alliterate in my world starts with a C.

This is no exception to that. If you ask me what our philosophy for training our children is, I will tell you clear expectations, clear consequences, and consistency.

We absolutely have to follow through with our children. So clear expectations, clear consequences, promises, and consistency. Next, we are prepared.

We are prepared. Prep your children for coming to church, right? Part of that is stating expectations, right? You can turn their minds to what is important about the day. If you have older children, you begin to talk to them about last week's text, what we may be preaching about this week, although these days, who knows what text we'll be in.

[42 : 04] But typically, you can look at where we are in the Scripture and see, with a fair guess, what verses will come next in our verse-by-verse exposition. It helps to hit the ground running, take the kids to the bathroom before you come inside, have their things ready to go.

So when we sit down and it's time to open God's Word and preach, you're not fumbling through backpacks and opening up loud containers, right? Let me suggest to you, bags that aren't crunchy and food that's not crunchy and toys that don't bang together, like, think about things that are quiet because it'll keep them quiet, right?

As they're seeing, I don't make noise with the stuff that I'm playing with. It'll help keep their volume down. But as they get louder here, they feel a little more justified to speak up over the top of.

So it can be really, really helpful to be thoughtful of that, right? Like a pencil bag that, right, maybe has a quiet Ziploc thing in its cloth rather than a giant Ziploc bag that has to be crunched in and out of to get things in and out of it.

Could be an example of something like that, right? You don't want your kids frantically jumping up and down and trying to find their stuff, right? When we begin to sit down together, it'll help them come sit down, settle in for our time, right?

[43 : 27] You have to prepare yourself as well. It will be hard to fully listen to an entire sermon with a squirmy, noisy toddler.

Amen, parents? This means that you cannot expect a Sunday morning to be your only biblical fuel for the week. This is true for every single one of us, right?

This can't be it. You will be malnourished if this is the only Bible you get. You see this morning, you're getting very little of it, right? Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 4. So, what should we be doing throughout the week, right?

We ought to be feeding ourselves from the Holy Writ every single day. Being filled up with the Bible will help you come here and maybe miss the third point from the second point.

And you'll be okay if you do that thing. Go back and listen to the recording or ladies, ask your attentive husband what was said there, right?

[44 : 31] Sermons are necessary, but they are certainly not enough. They're certainly not enough. And as you teach your children, as you prepare your children, right?

Keep in mind, for those of us with young children, these are working years and there will come reaping years. This is another Kathleen's Wimke mantra. mantra.

And if you guys know those Wimkes, you knew how wonderfully obedient her older girls were. They were just a joy to have around because they were really invested in as young children.

So, keep that in mind as we're doing the hard work of training our kids, right? That we are going to reap a reward for that kind of work. As your children grow, if they are trained, what a blessing it would be, what wonderful things would be, that they will be able to learn right alongside of you.

And you will learn together as a family, right? To sit together and to hear God's Word preached, to have conversations about it all afternoon, right? Until nap time comes.

[45 : 37] What a glorious thing that would be. Okay, we discipline. Proper discipline can be a difficult thing to navigate, but we can be sure that it is necessary.

Proverbs 22, 15 says that folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. So, we're talking about corrective discipline. Later in Proverbs 29, verse 15, the rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother, right?

And the Scripture encourages this kind of corrective discipline. Disciplining our children, Voddie Bauckham writes, is not about teaching them to behave in a way that won't embarrass us.

We are working towards something much more important than that. We're actually raising our children with a view toward leading them to trust and to follow Christ. So, after expectations are set and children understand them, make sure they know the consequences for disobedience.

It is good practice to use the same course of discipline as you would at home. Don't confuse them. There's different standards and consequences on Sunday than there are other days of the week, right?

[46 : 53] Again, for us, we have to remove our children to do the same thing at home from the room. You probably will have to as well. Remember to take advantage of that time at home when you're in an environment where discipline is much, much easier to administer.

When you take your kids out of this room, work not only to explain what they're doing wrong, but how it is disobedient and why that disobedience is not okay.

You don't want to just blindly discipline without also verbally correcting, helping them to understand, even at the very youngest age. Young parents ask Sam and I often, when do you start disciplining your kids?

And we say, on the changing table. You have to begin setting expectations, and our first expectation is don't roll over. That's it. I'm doing a really, really, really hard operation here.

If I'm going to not have to take a scalding hot shower, so don't move is the first command we give to our kids. And then we expect that they will not move.

[48 : 01] And we don't spank our infants, but we put our hand on their chest and pull them down if they're starting to roll over. And boy, do they get it quick. They understand, Dad is not happy with me when I am flipping over and smearing as I go.

So, parents, if your children are not keeping the standard that you set for them, don't try to correct, try to correct, try to correct, try to correct.

You need to get them up and you need to get them out. In fact, the non-parents in the room need to see you doing that, not trying to pacify them, but moving quickly with them to administer discipline.

Like, you have not met the standard, so we're heading out. There will be some discipline for not meeting the standard, and then we'll see how we can correct after that. Once you've left the room, you need to discern if it's possible to return to the meeting room.

It may not be possible to return to the room and be fruitful to sit in this space. Again, we have a training space across the hall. That's what that's there for.

[49 : 07] I know we call it the overflow room, a lot of you do. I call it the training space, right? It's got a TV over there. You can go sit as if you're sitting in here, but there you can be a little more corrective. They can be a little more distracting and help them in that space, right?

If they learn that when they have an outburst, they get to go do something more fun. You go across the hall and you put them down. You go put them in child care downstairs.

Guess what they're going to do every single Sunday, right? With our kids, fortunately, when both Kate and Judah, our older ones, were young, my brother-in-law was preaching as well, and so I had these big blocks of time that I wouldn't have to preach.

And so what I did in those times to help out Sam with our training is that if one of them, I mean, one little outburst, we'd give them a, you need to be quiet. If they didn't do it again, I was up and out of this room, and they would be spanked.

And then we would go into the kitchen, because you can hear through that little rollie door back there, what's going on in the room. We didn't have a cool TV across the hall at the time.

[50 : 11] And I would make them put their head down on my shoulder and be quiet. It's a lot less fun. In here, they got to sit and look at a book, right, or color. When they weren't appropriate, they got to do nothing.

Often they fell asleep when we did that, right? But it got less fun for them, and so they really quickly said, gosh, if I want to keep coloring, I've got to be quiet. And they learned to sit and to be quiet in that way.

And so you want to figure out the best way to move them to where you'd like for them to be here with us in the room, right? Remember that training area is there to serve you and to help you in eventually bringing kids over here.

Don't put them down. Make them sit in your lap in here. Maybe they can sit in a chair out over there. Maybe make them sit in your lap so it's less fun in that way. So moms of nursing infants, you know there's a nursing room there for you.

Certainly happy to have you use that. So how we help you do it, let me just run this really quickly. We do have child care downstairs during this time for other meetings that we have.

[51 : 22] We understand not all families and visitors have children who are ready to sit through a Sunday gathering. Some aren't ready for it yet and are still in the process, right? They don't need to be put in the game yet.

They still need to be trained at home. So training a child takes this time and patient sacrifice and we want to help. We want to be here to support you in that. The child care is provided with the short-term goal of accommodating visitors and we have had the family that walks in and we go, hey, did you know?

And I go, I mean, they are not prepared at all for having their children sit with them in the service. What a great thing. We have child care. Hey, that's no problem. We'd love for your kids to come downstairs.

That'd be totally okay. Okay. So that short-term goal and for also helping families with children in foster care, right? Children who are coming from being trained differently and trying to learn can be a very difficult thing.

So we want to serve those families well. But also the long-term goal of helping new member parents who join our church or new parents transition their kids into sitting through worship.

[52 : 31] And so I want to encourage you to do that as quickly as you can. Like really try to work your kids up here as quickly as you can. Work them up here. If you wait till your child is three years old to start training him to sit in here, you're starting from ground zero.

You might as well start earlier. That'd be my encouragement to you. I also know that we have those particularly tough, particularly tough days. And it's okay if you need to take a big deep breath and let somebody else hold your fussy one and a half year old while you sit and listen to a sermon.

That's all right. But we want to encourage you to not take advantage of that for a long period of time. But find space to be working with your kids and to be bringing them up here with us eventually.

I talked already about Aletheia Way. Meant to support, meant to show children that our church loves them. I love that you guys sing the kids song. That's such a good thing because it says to the kids that you're with them in this thing.

We're not just all gawking at you like animals in a zoo. But we're with you in singing these wonderful, simple songs that we sing with the children.

[53 : 41] They need to feel love. They need to feel appreciated in our gathering together. Not like the, we want you just off in the corner quiet. But please come and participate with us.

I love hearing the kids sing when we're singing our congregational songs together. That's a wonderful, wonderful thing. And they need to feel allowed to do that with us.

So we hope that Aletheia Way does that and serves as an example, as I said, for how you can do it at home. How you can simply sit down with your kids and do the things of God with them in your home.

I also mentioned previously Project Grow. It's a program aimed at teaching children the foundational truths of the Christian faith. And we're going to be using the New City Catechism, which is a systematic theology done in questions and answers that the kids will memorize to, again, come alongside to aid parents in this work.

And then finally, encouragement. It's really important to understand that no family in our congregation has ever shown up at the door with perfectly behaved children. There's no such thing, really.

[54 : 49] So if you see families who are doing it well, ask questions. How are you doing this? It's going to be a rare family that's going to go, I don't know, our kids just quiet all the time.

Had a couple of those kids. But for the most part, a lot of training went into helping kids sit quietly. And there is no need to feel embarrassed in our midst for the sake of a crying child.

We get that it happens, right? Those of you who are non-parents, help parents who are like picking up a kid that's crying and walking out of this room by not acting like it matters. It doesn't matter.

If you're so easily distracted, boy, you need to work on your focus. It's no big deal, right? Let them get up and walk out with every head turning as they go that way, right?

There's no need to feel embarrassed when the kid's having a rough day and you have to go do some disciplinary action. We've all gone through the training process and we're really happy.

[55 : 53] We rejoice to walk alongside you as you do this thing. And so I hope that this bit of time, and again, I know this is abnormal. I feel like I've got to just read something from the Bible real quick.

This is a lot to work out of a couple of very simple commands, right? The responsibility of child raising is laid on the shoulders of parents.

So we want to keep thinking about how do we do this really well together because we want these kids, right, to repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We want to see genuine faith in our children and we're going to have to help parents do that, right? We want to come together to be intergenerational to aid them in the process of raising up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together.