

Abraham's addendum to his sharing in the Family Workshop of the Co-workers Retreat 2022

During the parenthood workshop, I stressed the disproportionate impact that fathers have on their children's spiritual growth. This is important and true. What I said was targeted at the fathers who were present at the workshop. But immediately after, I regretted not talking about God as the father to the fatherless.

I understand that there are many sisters among us who are mothers to children who have absent or unbelieving fathers or fathers who for many other reasons are not involved with their children's spiritual growth. To these sisters I want to say that, as in Psalm 68:5-6, God truly is the father to the fatherless, the defender of widows and the one who sets the lonely in families. And God works through two ways.

The first is directly. We truly can have a direct relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ through prayer, Scripture and the experience of the Spirit in our day to day life. It is a tragedy that when fathers are missing or unbelievers or even believers who may act unworthily, the image of God that the children have is heavily influenced. But God is so gracious and he will work to restore and redeem your children. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul says that even if the husband is unbelieving, your children are holy because of your faith in Christ and your salvation by his grace. This means that God is looking out for your children in a special way, so don't lose hope or see the task of raising godly children as impossible. God is with you and he will teach your children what his true and loving fatherhood is like.

The second way God works is through the church. It is in the church where your children can find earthly fathers who love them with a holy love. Michelle's third point was that you are in a community of believers and we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord. So pray that God will put godly men in the lives of your children. Pray and ask the Lord for guidance on who and how you can foster and encourage healthy relationships for your children with godly men. The church is God's visible way of redeeming from the effects of broken families.

So don't lose heart or hope. All things are possible with God and he loves your children. Your task is to cooperate with him through consistent prayer, Biblical teaching and faithful living.

Abraham 在2022年事奉退修会家庭工作坊分享之补充 (中文翻译)

在家庭工作坊里, 我强调了父亲对孩子们属灵成长有着巨大的影响。这是重要且真实的。我当时所谈及的内容乃是对着在场的爸爸们说的。但随即我后悔自己没有谈到神是无父孩子的父亲。

我了解到我们中间有不少的姊妹, 她们孩子的父亲是缺席的、不信主的、或是因种种原因没有参与孩子的属灵成长的。我想对这些姊妹说, 诗篇 68章5-6节里讲到: “神是孤儿的父, 是寡妇的伸冤者, 神叫孤独的有家”。神透过以下两种方式作这工。

第一种是直接的: 我们确实是能藉着耶稣基督与父神建立直接的关系, 通过祷告、读经和在我们日常生活里圣灵的经历。虽然很可惜当父亲是缺席的, 不信主的或是信主的却做了不当的行为时, 孩子心中对神的形象会受到严重影响, 但神却是如此满有恩典, 祂可以在你们的孩子身上施行恢复和救赎的工作。在哥林多前书 7章14节, 保罗说到, 即使丈夫不信主, 因为你在基督

里的信心和靠祂恩典的拯救，你的孩子也可以是圣洁的。这意味着神在用特别的方式看顾你们的孩子。所以不要灰心绝望或觉得养育敬虔孩子的任务是不可能的。神与你同在，祂将会教导你们的孩子祂那真实的和充满爱的父道是怎么样的。

神工作的第二种方式是通过教会。在教会里，你们的孩子可以找到通过圣洁的爱爱他们的“地上父亲”。Michelle讲到的第三点说：你们是在信徒群体中，我们都是主内的弟兄姊妹。所以你们要祈求神将敬畏神的弟兄放在孩子们的生命中，祷告并求主教导你如何选择，促进和鼓励孩子们与敬畏神的弟兄建立健康的关系。教会是神最显明的方式来施行对破碎家庭影响的救赎。

所以请不要灰心或绝望。在神凡事都能并且祂爱你们的孩子。你们的任务是透过持续的祷告、圣经的教导和过一个对神忠心的生活与神同工。