

My wife and I raised seven children. They range in age from 26-36. They are all living as dedicated Christians. One is a missionary in Asia. Five are serving in our church. One serves a church in Iowa.

People sometimes ask me, "how can I successfully raise Christian kids?"

If raising children as Christians is not a priority, then read no further.

Here is how we did it.

- 1) Be aware that mom and dad should be in agreement. If you want to raise Christian children but your spouse does not, it will not be easy for you.
- 2) Live as a Christian seven days a week. Your "church self" must be your "everyday self." If you are wrong, admit it. Children can see consistency, and they can see hypocrisy in their parents. Demonstrate your beliefs in word and deed.
- 3) Respect church authority. Do not voice any criticism of church leadership in front of your children. Speak to the leadership directly and resolve your issue. You will forget the problem in time, but if your kids hear it, they will not forget it. They will wonder why you make them go to such a "bad place."
- 4) Speak once, then raise your voice as the second warning. Let them learn with certainty that if they continue to misbehave after the raised voice, that discipline will certainly follow. If you want well behaved children, you must be consistent in this.
- 5) Do not speak of other people's shortcomings. Confess your own shortcomings.
- 6) Make church attendance the first and only priority during "church time." If parents choose other things to do during church time, children will believe there are things that are a higher priority than serving, learning, and worshipping God. They will see it. When they grow up, your teenagers will demand to decide for themselves what is more important to him or her. Then it will be too late.
- 7) Never tell your children that they can "decide for themselves" if they want to follow the LORD when they reach a certain age. Instead tell them that you are leading them in the right way now, and they must decide to make the right choice. Tell them they must decide to follow Jesus when they are old enough to do so by their own volition.
- 8) Use meal, travel, and bed time to discuss what you see (good or bad) during the day. (Deut. 11:19) Remember, it is your primary responsibility to teach your children. To rely on another is an abdication of your responsibility. Make sure your children learn the proverbs, and the way of belief and salvation.