

# **FATHERS' WEEK**

## **September 9-15, 2019**

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### **THEME: THE CHALLENGES WE FACE AS MEN IN FULFILLING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THESE NEW DAYS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this Fathers' Week, we focus on the challenges set in the theme above. These challenges require diligent and careful study and discussion of solutions in the light of God's Word.

These are some challenges which we will think seriously about this week.

1. The ill-treatment and violence inflicted on women and our children. What can we do -- what shall we do -- to eliminate this problem and free our women and offspring from it?
2. Teenage pregnancies among our daughters. The numbers are rising quickly. What can we do -- what shall we do -- to reduce or eliminate this problem?
3. The rising incidence in drunkenness and drug abuse among our young people. What can we do -- what shall we do -- to solve this serious problem?
4. The rising numbers of young people serving sentences in the Corrections institutions, on crime related to poverty, committed in urban centres, rural areas and the outer islands. This problem highlights the presence of poverty, although many of us have the resources to address financial needs. What can we do – what shall we do – as men, to fight poverty and create financial security in our families?
5. We are challenged as men to improve the education of our children. What can we do – what shall we do -- to address this problem.

These are some challenges which we face, as men, which we will seriously consider in turn in the evenings of this week. We will talk about these issues with members of our families, propose and plan to implement solutions. My hope is that we will devote time and will be committed to taking action on the solutions we plan together.

#### **TWO (2) IMPORTANT REQUESTS**

When the week is ended, the leaders are asked to organise the collection of all the written answers to questions set for each night, and to send these papers to Church headquarters in Suva, for the Committee to prepare our work plan **BASED ON THE QUESTIONS RAISED DURING THE WEEK.**

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**MONDAY: 9/9/2019**

## **FIRST CHALLENGE: THE ILL-TREATMENT AND VIOLENCE INFLICTED ON OUR WOMEN AND YOUNG DAUGHTERS**

### **WHAT TO DO BEFORE THE CHURCH SERVICE**

We are to invite our wives and members of our families to be our guests on each night of this week. Please ensure that all family members attend the church services. If possible, we are to prepare tea (and refreshments) for our families to have after service.

### **WHAT TO DO DURING THE SERVICE**

One man is to lead the singing and prayers, following the order of service. Another to do the Scripture reading. Reading: 2 Samuel 13:1-39.

Somebody to explain this Biblical narrative. It is a story of violence against women

### **WHAT TO DO AFTER THE NARRATIVE IS EXPLAINED**

Separate the family members into four (4) groups.

1. Mothers & Senior Women
2. Fathers & Senior Men
3. Young Men
4. Young Women

Allocate 25 minutes for the groups to discuss the questions set out below. The groups to report back when the congregation reassembles. One man to record on paper the answers to the questions provided for the four groups, and also their proposals.

### **QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Fathers (& Senior Men) to discuss the following question: What did David do, as the father, in this story?
2. Mothers (& Senior Women) to discuss this: What part did the mothers play in the story?
3. Questions for the Young Men: What was Amnon's problem which led to the violent attack on Tamar? What was Absalom's weakness?
4. Questions for the Young Women: What should Tamar have done to avoid the attack? If the situation Tamar faced were to happen today, what should Tamar do to protect herself?

### **AFTER THE GROUP DISCUSSION**

After 25 minutes of discussion, the family members will re-assemble, and each group will report on the discussion of questions set for them.

Someone is to sum up on the group reports, and advise everyone on the problems and challenges we face. He (or she) is to emphasise the responsibility of the father to protect his young daughters and sons from problems raised in the group discussion.

Alternatively, a guest may be invited to speak to the congregation, based on the reports from the group discussion.

The service is to conclude with prayer(s) on ill-treatment and violence against women and children.

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**TUESDAY 10/9/2019**

**SECOND CHALLENGE: TEENAGE PREGNANCIES & UNWANTED PREGNANCIES FOR SINGLE MOTHERS**

**WHAT TO DO**

A man to lead the service, following the usual order of service.

**Reading: 1 Corinthians 6: 18-20; 1Thessalonians 4: 3-5.**

A man to speak on the problem of teenage pregnancies and unwanted pregnancies of single mothers in Fiji. (A guest can be invited to do this, before the group discussions are held.)

The readings for this evening show that these problems arise from sexual immorality. The statistics on these are rising, and some girls get pregnant while still attending school. There are several causes of teenage pregnancies, one of them is parental neglect of their responsibility.

Fornication is a general term which usually refers to sex between two unmarried people. Christians are to flee fornication for the believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6: 18-19).

Adultery is the sexual union between a married man and someone other than his wife, or between a married woman and someone other than her husband. The Ten Commandments contain the prohibition against adultery: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20: 14). Adultery violates the bond of marriage. Marriage is the foundation of society, and with it comes the responsibility of child rearing.

**QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION**

Family members to go to their discussion groups from Monday.

1. Fathers’ & Senior Men’s group: What can we do – or shall we do – as men, to eliminate this problem from the lives of our young men and women? Has anyone of us been sexually immoral? Have you confessed to whom you have wronged? Proverbs 28: 13; 1 John 1: 9-10.
2. Mothers’ & Senior Women’s group: What can or shall we do, as mothers, to eliminate this problem? Has anyone of us been sexually immoral? Have you confessed to whom you have wronged? Proverbs 28: 13; 1John 1: 9-10.

3. Young Men's group: What can – and what will – young men do to solve this problem? Has anyone of us been sexually immoral? Have you confessed to whom you have wronged? Proverbs 28: 13; 1 John 1: 9-10.
4. Young Women's group: How shall we protect ourselves from this problem? Has anyone of us been sexually immoral, have you confessed to whom you have wronged? Proverbs 28: 13; 1 John 1: 9-10.

**AFTER THE GROUP DISCUSSION**

The groups to present their reports after 25 minutes of discussion.

A Men's Fellowship leader to conclude this session by summing up the ideas reported by the groups and encouraging the family members present. Some important issues for him to address are as follows:

1. Purity for marriage for young men and young women (1Peter 1: 15-16).
2. Exercising individual freedom and rights with wisdom (Galatians 5: 13-14).
3. Honouring God with our bodies (1 Corinthians 6: 12-20).

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**WEDNESDAY 11/9/19**

**THIRD CHALLENGE: INCREASING PROBLEM OF DRUNKENNESS AND DRUG ABUSE AMONG OUR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**WHAT TO DO**

Someone to lead the service. A hymn, prayer and the Bible reading.  
 Reading: Proverbs 23: 29-35; Ephesians 5: 15-18;  
 Someone to explain the problem of drug abuse in Fiji.

This is a dangerous problem affecting the nation, particularly the lives of young people. The Bible prohibits drunkenness from wine, because it causes problems in our lives, our families and in the community.

The Wisdom verses point to injury, poverty and broken marriages, arising from drunkenness. It is a dangerous "communicable" disease!

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

Return to our 4 groups.

1. Questions for Fathers (& Senior Men): Why are drunkenness & drug abuse bad, in relation to manhood and fatherhood? What can – or shall – we do about this problem?

2. Mothers & Senior Women: Why are drunkenness & drug abuse bad for womanhood and motherhood? What can we do about this problem?
3. Young Men: Why are drunkenness & drug abuse bad in our lives as young men? What can & what shall we do about this problem?
4. Young Women: Why are drunkenness & drug abuse bad in our lives as young women? What can & what shall we do about this problem?

**AFTER THE GROUP DISCUSSION**

The 4 groups report back to all the members of families on their discussion. A Men’s Fellowship leader will sum up the reports and give advice on drunkenness and drug abuse. Some ideas to include in this input are as follows:

1. Exercising personal freedom in relation to drunkenness and drug abuse.
2. The danger of drunkenness and drug abuse in the life of a father or mother.
3. Drunkenness and drug abuse in the life of a young person.

The service to conclude with prayer(s) for people facing problems of drunkenness and drug abuse.

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**THURSDAY 12/9/2019**

**FOURTH CHALLENGE: POVERTY IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY**

**WHAT TO DO**

A man to lead the service. Hymn, prayer and reading of the Word.

Reading: Jeremiah 29: 5-7; Luke 4: 18-21. Someone to introduce an explanation of the financial difficulties we face.

- Poverty is the enemy of God.
- God’s purpose is for His people to be prosperous. “Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant” (Psalms 35: 27 KJV)
- Poverty enslaves us.
- Poverty blinds us from seeing the needs of our neighbours.
- Poverty damages and injures our personal lives.
- Poverty prevents us from seeing the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4: 18-19).
- Our task is to fight poverty.
- Jeremiah told the Israelites during their exile in Babylon that they were to produce a lot from their farms, to build good houses, and get their children married so that their tribes increase in number. That is an apt description of prosperity. They produce plenty in their place of exile. We are to make more where we are.

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. For Fathers and Senior Men: What is the purpose of prosperity for believers? How do we raise more wealth?
2. Mothers and Senior Women: What causes poverty in our families? What can we do, what shall we do, as women, to solve this problem? What can we do with whatever money or wealth we produce?
3. Young Men: What can we do, what shall we do, as young men, to fight poverty in our villages, communities and settlements? What causes our poverty? What shall we do to make the best use of resources we have, to raise the level of money and wealth we make?
4. Young Women: What can we do – what shall we do – to address poverty effectively in and through the community, our families and the church. What can we, how shall we, as young women, increase money and wealth we generate for ourselves and our families.

## AFTER THE GROUP DISCUSSION

After the group discussions, the groups are to report on their findings and plans. A member of the Men's Fellowship will sum up and comment on the group discussions on addressing poverty and building financial security. He will seek commitment from family members to join hands and in their effort to fight poverty.

Conclude the evening session with prayer(s). Pray for plans and methods for creating prosperity and financial security in villages and communities.

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**FRIDAY 13/9/2019**

## **FIFTH CHALLENGE: EXCELLENT EDUCATION FOR OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS**

### **WHAT TO DO**

Someone to lead the service, as usual. Somebody to do the Bible reading. Reading: Ecclesiastes 2: 12-14

A speaker to explain the importance of ensuring excellent education, especially for our young people. These are some points to emphasise, based on the Bible reading.

“The wise man's eyes are in his head” (verse 14, KJV).

### **TWO SOURCES OF LIGHT IN OUR HUMAN LIVES**

1. Our mind and our spirit

Our minds are parts of our bodily functions, and they are nurtured and sharpened through education, just as we strengthen our bodies through physical training.

Our minds help us in decision-making. We make decisions on what we hear, see or feel.

Our mind is developed through education. When there is a problem in someone's education, the result is as if the person concerned is in darkness.

When the people in a community do not get a sound education, there is bound to be poverty there, as a result.

## 2. Our spirit

This is our second eye; through which we make sense of the world. When our spirit is troubled, it is as if darkness affects our behaviour.

Jesus said: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6: 22-23 KJV).

## **IT IS IMPORTANT TO ATTEND TO BOTH, THE MIND (EDUCATION) AND THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN**

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK (ALL FAMILY MEMBERS)**

1. What can we do – what shall we do – to support and improve the education of our young people and children.
  - (a) In their study at night
  - (b) In their daily student life

Once again, somebody is to sum up the discussion, clarify and seek commitment of family members to implementing solutions for supporting and improving the education of our young people and children,

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**SATURDAY 14/9/2019**

### **WHAT TO DO**

This evening, the men are to lead family worship in our homes. We are to prepare our lessons and sermon for this special occasion.

We have some things to do after preaching to our families.

1. To discuss any problems which each family may be facing, and to seek the views of family members on how the problem(s) can be resolved.

2. Conclude the worship with prayer.

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**SUNDAY 15/9/19**

**MORNING SERVICE 10:00am**

Reading: Genesis 2: 8-25

**THEME: THE TRUE MAN-SERVANT LEADER**

**INTRODUCTION**

All men are called to lead. This is the gift which God gave us in the Creation story. He gave Adam the task of naming animals in the Garden of Eden. This points to a leadership mandate.

Some points to reflect on in this message:

1. Men’s leadership (stewardship) will determine whether the world (garden) is ruined or flourishes.
2. Exercising this duty of leadership will depend on the decisions men make.
3. Women are our “help meet” in leadership. It is important that we listen to them and work with them. They are our close companions and capable help.
4. It is important in leadership to know the people whom we lead.
5. Knowing the people, we lead depends on being close to them.
6. We must be concerned about the problems which members of our family may be facing.
7. Be open in our relationship with our sons and daughters, so they feel free to share their thoughts and feelings with us.
8. Good leadership begins in the home (1 Timothy 5: 8).

Explain Paul’s words to Timothy on the importance of the family as the starting point in good leadership.

**AFTER THE SERMON**

The Offering is collected, before concluding the service.

The money to be sent to Church head office, for our Fellowship.

Conclude with prayer and the Blessings.

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**SUNDAY – AFTERNOON SERVICE (4.00pm)**

Make this a short service.

Reading: John 13: 1-15

Present a spiritual reflection. The heart of the reflection to be the significance of the Washing of the Feet.

Questions to assist in the sermon preparation:

1. Why did Jesus choose the last night before His death to wash the disciples' feet?
2. What is the meaning of the washing of the feet?
3. Jesus knew that one of his disciples would betray him. Why did He still wash that disciple's feet?
  - It is important in spiritual cleansing
  - The Confession
  - The Acceptance
  - The Forgiveness

The fruit of spiritual cleansing is the freeing of the spirit and peace.

After the conclusion of the spiritual reflection, time is to be given for spiritual cleansing, for coming clean with each other.

#### **ORDER OF SPIRITUAL CLEANSING**

- 1. TO SIT TOGETHER IN FAMILIES AND CONFESS TO EACH OTHER AS FAMILY MEMBERS**
- 2. THE MEN TO MAKE THEIR CONFESSION FIRST TO THEIR WIVES, AND CONCLUDE WITH THEIR CHILDREN**
- 3. MOTHERS TO CONFESS TO MEN, AND CONCLUDE WITH THEIR CHILDREN**
- 4. CHILDREN TO CONFESS INDIVIDUALLY TO THEIR FATHERS AND MOTHERS**

Then serve our families with tea or food. And thank them that Fathers' Week is now ending.

Some things to be done before the close of the evening.

1. To visit our companions, men who are ill. We are to prepare gifts to take with us.

Decide whether visiting the sick will be done before or after tea or the meal is shared by the families. Each church is to decide on this.

In conclusion, we hope and pray that this will be a fruitful and blessed Fathers' Week.

**Rev. Ili Vunisuwai**  
**Chairman of the Committee**  
**Men's Fellowship**