

The Duties of the Priest Part 8

The Impact of the Family in the Church

The Future of the Church of God is in our Hands

A family has great impact in the church. The way we lead our families finally produces fruit for the church where God has placed us. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ said, ***“33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.” (Matthew 12:33 KJV)*** Each family should be a tree of righteousness that bears good fruit to the LORD. ***“3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:3 KJV)*** It is in our hands and jurisdiction to make our families become trees producing good fruit. If we discipline our children today, our church will be secure and will continue its mission to the next generation. In this message, few real stories that happened in the Bible would be discussed to depict the impact of each family to the ministry of the Lord or to the Church.

Eli was the priest serving in the tent of the Lord during latter time of Judges. ***“12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 13 And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; 14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. 16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. 17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.” (1 Samuel 2:12-17 KJV)*** The sons of the priest Eli were wicked. They involved themselves in corruption using God's service to make money and for their selfish gain. They also took advantage doing immoralities and having sexual relations with the women involved in God's service: ***“22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” (1 Samuel 2:22 KJV)***

First, Eli, the priest was not aware of what his sons had been doing but all the people around them already knew about their issue. Later Eli heard about it but he did not take any disciplinary action to stop them. ***“23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. 24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD's people to transgress.” (1 Samuel 2:23-24 KJV)*** The people who knew about the wickedness of the priest's sons also showed no concern to correct or stop them in defiling the tent of meeting. They were insensitive to sin because they no longer practiced the command of the Lord: ***“10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” (Leviticus 20:10 KJV)*** Priest Eli was concerned about his sons' wicked doings but he showed no commitment to discipline them according to the Word of God: ***“18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the***

voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.” (Deuteronomy 21:18-21 KJV) Definitely Eli did not discipline his sons as he ought to have because he loved them, but such act also showed that he loved his children more than God's Word, God's Sanctuary, and God's people. Likewise, the people were complacent and tolerant to sin because the priest, who was leading them, was compromising and tolerating the sins of his children. Priest Eli was not a good example as a priest of God and he did not do right in raising up his children in the fear of the Lord. He denied the power of God's law and so the Lord took away his family from ministering at the tent of meeting.

1. “27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? 29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? 30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. 32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. 33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. 34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. 35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. 36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.” (1 Samuel 2:27-36 KJV) The Lord God sent a man to rebuke priest Eli. His sin was clearly defined as he honored his sons more than God, and ate with them the best portions of the people's offerings. Eli was the head of the priestly family but he disrespected the sacrifices and offerings for God because he condoned the sins of his sons. As a consequence of Eli's sin and complacency, the life span in his family line was cut short. His descendants would die in the prime of life, and those left in his family line would beg for some priestly office in order to have food to eat. God also told him that his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, would die in one day. But in spite of God's rebuke to the priest, Eli did not take the opportunity to repent and to correct his stand toward his children. So God spoke to Samuel who from boyhood had been serving the Lord.

2. “10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11 And the LORD said to Samuel,

Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. 15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. 17 And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. 18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.” (1 Samuel 3:10-18 KJV) The Lord’s judgment for Eli’s family was foretold because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to discipline them. Yet Eli’s complacency remained. Eli said, *“It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.”*

The Lord God is eternal, and He is a righteous God. Those who honor Him, He will honor, but those who despise Him will be despised. God’s Words do not change, and God knows His people. Many parents nowadays do not show concern about the foolishness of their growing children. They seem like Eli who just said, *“it is no good report”*, but they do not make a move to correct their children. God brought judgment on the family of Eli, and the same will happen to the family of parents who do not do their duties as royal priests to discipline and nurture their children in the fear of the LORD.

A. The parents who are not mindful of the ways of their children and show tolerance to the sins they are doing, they themselves are bringing destruction not only on their children but to the life of the whole church. *“31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. 32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.” (1 Samuel 2:31-32 KJV)*

B. The parents who love their children more than God will be rejected by God, and their family will not have enough strength needed to do God’s work. Parents who follow their emotions towards their children are unable to discipline their children, and they will not have the wisdom and the strength to deal properly with their children’s sins. *“29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?” (1 Samuel 2:29 KJV)*

C. When parents fail to discipline their children and restrain them, their children and their descendants will become wayward in life and conduct, and they will become bad testimony to others. Moreover, not only they themselves will die in their sins, but also other children will be harmed and affected by the consequence of their sin. The whole family and the whole church will be in turmoil, horror and great danger. *“33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. 34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.” (1 Samuel 2:33-34 KJV)*

D. The ministers of God who fail or are not willing to discipline their children and their workers in the ministry, the outcome of their family and ministry is rejection by the LORD and their ministry will not last forever. *“13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.” (1 Samuel 3:13 KJV)*

E. The descendants of the ministers who fail to execute discipline will be like the descendants of Eli who were rejected by the Lord. They became the beggars inside the body of Christ begging for ministry in order to live. *“35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. 36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.” (1 Samuel 2:35-36 KJV)* Nowadays, we find pastors or ministers who use the ministry as a way to make money and earn for living. They depend on the church or they would start a ministry in order to have food to eat. But they would fall short of the promise of God in *Psalms 37:25*, *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”*

F. When sin inside the church is taking place and no one is taking disciplinary action, the wrath of God is never atoned. No church activities or praise and worship offerings can cover the sin of the church ministers and workers. Likewise, without discipline in the church, the people of God become wild, sins become so rampant and common to all, and finally the whole community of believers becomes insensitive to sin, up to the point that those obedient who deal diligently with sin inside the body of Christ would be called ‘odd’ by the opinion of those who tolerate sin. *“14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.” (1 Samuel 3:14 KJV)*

The outcome of the life of our family and our children has great impact in the life and the future of God’s Church. Accordingly, God is gracious and loving, giving chances and reminders for His people to repent of their sins. This message could be a warning to take heed and to apply carefully in our families. If we do not repent, God will bring judgment to the next generation and to our church. So let us consider and choose to carefully apply the required discipline to our children, to our ministry workers, and to the people under our care. God cannot be mocked, and we reap what we sow as seeds. If we sow righteousness in the hearts of our children and ministry workers, God’s Church will continue to receive the blessings, and we enjoy being His priests. If we ignore foolishness and sin, then curses will come upon our descendants and to the church.

Samuel was the man whom God raised and chose after priest Eli. (Also, it is noteworthy to note that Samuel’s mother fulfilled her promise to God to dedicate Samuel for the Lord’s work in the house of the Lord.) Samuel grew in God’s service and became the leader of the Israelites bringing victory over their enemies. *“19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. 21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.” (1 Samuel 3:19-21 KJV)* *“2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of*

Israel lamented after the LORD. 3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. 5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. 6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. 10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar. 12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. 13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. 15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. 17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.” (1 Samuel 7:2-17 KJV)

The Lord was with Samuel, and he was able to discipline the Israelites and lead them in the way of the Lord. He directed them to throw away their idols, to fully surrender their will to God and serve Him only. The people complied with Samuel’s instruction to turn back to God in repentance, prayer and fasting. And truly God restored what is due to them, from the hands of their enemies.

“1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. 3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” (1 Samuel 8:1-5 KJV) Samuel grew up in the tent of God, and he grew old, faithfully serving God and God’s people. When he was old, he appointed his sons to do the work. But his sons did not do like him, and they did not walk in his ways. They turned aside looking for dishonest gain, accepting bribes and perverting justice. The people were right to dislike Samuel’s sons, but they were wrong to copy the styles of the unbelieving nations to ask for a king. This is what the Lord required: *“18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the*

words of the righteous. 20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” (Deuteronomy 16:18-20 KJV)

The request of the Israelites to Samuel to appoint a king over them was not actually because of his sons but because they wanted to be like other nations having a king. The people used the situation of Samuel’s sons as excuse to satisfy their own personal ambition and choice. Finally, Saul’s kingship was established over Israel, but he soon led the whole of Israel into rebellion against God until Israel was destroyed by her enemies, the Philistines in the Mount of Gilboa, an event recorded in *1 Samuel Chapter 31*.

Bad leadership was introduced over all Israel and it caused disorder because Samuel’s sons did not follow God’s ways. **In the same way, bad future awaits the church and our children if our children are not disciplined and taught how to rightly serve God in the way the Lord requires. If our children fail to minister to God and to do what God requires, then another leader like Saul would rise in our church, who may arouse God’s wrath upon our descendants.**

My Dear and Beloved: Let us meditate and carefully consider the thought of the message of God. The future of our children and our church are in our hands being the royal priests chosen by God. The way we live our lives, the way we nurture our children and the way that we discipline and deal with sin is all in our hands today. If we do well, then good future awaits our children and the church that God had entrusted to us. But if we fail to do our responsibility we are inviting Satan and its schemes and tactics in the lives of our children and in the lives of our families, and the harm will spread to the church that God has placed us in. So let us diligently work to lead our families with the purpose to bear good fruit and fruit that will last for the glory of the LORD.

Let us pray . . .

My Prayer: Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from death to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for the inspiring message that shows me clearly the real dangers of sins in the life of my family and in the life of your church. Lord thank you for the teaching, the rebukes and the corrections that I received in this message. Lord thank you for your Word that showed me clearly what I need to do with my family and children and with my coworkers in the ministry and the church that you had placed me in.

Come now to God and confess your sins. Confess and renounce your compromises and your lack of discipline toward your children, and the compromises and the corruption that you are allowing among your coworkers in God’s church. Confess and renounce your selfishness, and lack of concern. Confess and renounce your lust and your immoralities and all such and the idols that you allowed in the life of the church and the ministry that you entrusted with. Confess and renounce your love of money and your using the church and the ministry for living. Confess and renounce your fear of man but you don’t fear God. Confess and renounce your worldliness, your love for the world, your yoke and wasting time with non believers and friends, and in bondage with the Media, News and games. Confess and renounce your idol worship in the form of keeping practices of the old religion, feasts offered to idols, your bad stewardship and wasting your resources on things unnecessary. Confess and renounce your

non willingness to persevere and do your part in cleaning your family and God's church. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins _____ .

Lord I commit myself to deal with the sins of my children and the sins inside my ministry and the church that you placed me in. Lord I ask you to give me courage and boldness to stand firm, to rebuke and to implement the discipline needed so holiness will be seen in the life of my family and in my ministry and your church. Lord give me good health and strength and provide for me and give me wisdom to accomplish that. This is my prayer in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented of their sins, and committed their lives to the message of your Word. Lord uphold them with your grace, protect them from persecution and provide for them so they will continue to serve you, that their lives and the lives of their families and ministries will be good example for others to follow.

Lord, lead us as your church to continue to deal with sins, corruptions and compromises, so that holiness will spread in our midst. Lord we ask you to expose hidden sins and give us wisdom to deal with those involved in. We pray that you lead us with the Holy Spirit to do the works that you want us to achieve for you. Lord we commit ourselves to continue to teach, discipline, and train our children and disciples to go on and serve you that they will be the future leaders who will make a difference in the world. Lord we ask you to refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need to go on and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant new Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God.' Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

The Duties of the Priest Part 8. The Impact of the Family in the Church. The Future of the Church of God is in our Hands. Matthew 12:33. Isaiah 61:3. 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-24, 27-36. Leviticus 20:10. Deuteronomy 21:18-21. Psalm 37:25. 1 Samuel 3:10-21. 1 Samuel 7:2-17. 1 Samuel 8:1-5. Deuteronomy 16:18-20.

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