

FAMILY MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

The strength of the church is based in the spiritual life of its members and families. God expects families to have mutually satisfying relationships (Mal. 4:6). He desires that husbands and wives experience unity (Matt. 19:5, 6); that parents “do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

The guiding principles of the Bible direct that Christians nurture the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs of the individuals, couples and families who constitute the fabric of fellowship in the church. When the church ministers to the needs of families as Christ did, they are restored to wholeness. Families who feel complete, and have harmonious relationships, are more likely to be dedicated to God’s goals (Col. 2:10).

Family crises cannot be the only motivation for family ministry. Healthy family functioning is a primary goal. A family should provide for the transmission of values, and be a witness for God in the world of His power to unify and engender the happiness of each person. The family is the ordained place where human beings can experience love to its fullest extent—romantic love, friendship love and redemptive love.

Families need to be taught the meaning of love. Love fosters health and decreases stress. “Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred” (Prov. 15:17).

Families need to develop stable relationships patterned after God’s relationship with us. He has declared, “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). God’s love is unconditional, enduring and responsible.

The family is probably the best illustration God has of what He is like. A family that is spiritually healthy will manifest characteristics of humility, patience, hope, and loving acceptance.

Duties of the Family Ministries Coordinator

The major functions and tasks of the family ministries coordinator are the following:

1. *Needs assessment.* Work with the pastor to survey the needs of the church: couples, single persons, single parents, children, teens, young adults, mature adults, etc., finding which topics are of interest to them. Needs assessment tools such as survey questionnaires and analysis worksheets are available in some of the resource materials listed in this leaflet and from your local conference office. Your conference family ministries director may be able to assist you.
2. *Program development.* The family ministries coordinator works in cooperation with other church leaders to implement family life programs. This involves planning, promotion, recruitment and training of volunteers, delivery of the programs and evaluation. Although a number of very detailed and “user-friendly” program helps are available, successful programs still require considerable attention to detail, good organization and strong communication for many weeks in advance.
3. *Chairs the family ministries committee.* It is recommended that even in the smallest congregations a committee be selected for family ministries instead of following the tradition of making it a one-person assignment. Family ministry is about relationships and helping people learn to be Christlike in their relationships. This needs to be modeled in a group setting because it is “caught as much as it is taught.” Even if the committee only meets once a quarter, and includes people who hold other offices in the church, it should become a support group as well as a working unit. As chairperson it is your responsibility not only to put together an agenda and moderate the discussions, but to facilitate times of personal sharing, prayer and learning.
4. *Family advocate.* The family ministries coordinator sits on the church board and should represent the needs and concerns of family life there. It is easy for a board to

become involved in the organizational and financial issues of the church and forget that congregations are essentially clusters of households; people trying to live out their faith together. It is your responsibility to help the board keep in view the relational needs of the members of the church and make family life a real priority in all that the church does.

5. *Information source.* The congregation will depend on you as a primary source of information about ministry. It would be a good idea for you to begin to construct a list of Christian counselors to whom you can feel confident making referrals. You will want to guard against getting too involved or “playing psychologist” (unless you are one), but highly developed listening skills will make it easy for other church members to share their concerns and needs with you and ask for information. This informational task includes taking opportunity regularly, during personal ministries time or Sabbath School or worship, to share information with the whole congregation as it comes to you from the conference and in resource materials.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

Facing Family Crises, by Ron and Karen Flowers with Elaine and Willie Oliver, Bernie and Karen Holford, Gary Hopkins, Lindrey Niles and Larry Yeagley.

Families Filled with Joy, by Ron and Karen Flowers with Bryan Craig, Bernie and Karen Holford and Elaine and Willie Oliver.

Family Life is a quarterly newsletter published by the Adventist Association of Family Life Professionals. A subscription can be ordered by writing AAFLP, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 or call 301-680-6462.

Family Ministries Curriculum, prepared by Willie Oliver and May-Ellen Colon. Published by North American Division, Family Ministries. Available in both English and Spanish.

Grieving, by Reg Brown. A practical Christian guide to the grieving process with down-to-earth counsel for those who have lost a loved one.

How to Help Your Child Really Love Jesus, by Donna Habenicht. A child development specialist explains how children develop spiritually and offers practical suggestions on how you can help children establish a lasting friendship with God.

Keeping the Faith, by V. Bailey and Judith Gillespie with Timothy Gillespie and Cheryl Webster.

New Beginnings, by Ron and Karen Flowers with Elaine and Willie Oliver, Waveney Martinborough, Danie Swanepoel, Bernie and Karen Holford, Pleny Camagay and JoAnn Davidson.

Respect in the Family, by Marilyn A. Wolcott. Practical Christ-centered guidelines for developing solid family relationships through respect and honor.

The Color of Grace in our Homes, by Stuart Tyner. Provides 100 creative ideas to enrich family worship.

Understanding Families, by Karen and Ron Flowers with Roberto Badenas, Bryan Craig and Elaine and Willie Oliver.

Understanding Intimate Violence, edited by Barbara Couden. Presents hope, help and healing for domestic violence, including how to help a victim, recovery programs that work, and where to go for help.

Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-Year Study, by Roger Dudley. Find out why they leave and what keeps some of them in the church.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org/family for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.