The Four
Family Ministry
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Key Scripture:

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (NLT)
4 “Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God,
the LORD alone. 5 And you must love the
LORD your God with all your heart, all your
soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must
commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these
commands that I am giving you today.
7 Repeat them again and again to your
children. Talk about them when you are at
home and when you are on the road, when
you are going to bed and when you are
getting up. 8 Tie them to your hands and
wear them on your forehead as reminders.
9 Write them on the doorposts of your
house and on your gates.

Psalm 78:1–6 (NLT)
1 O my people, listen to my instructions.
Open your ears to what I am saying,
2 for I will speak to you in a parable.
I will teach you hidden lessons from our
past—
3 stories we have heard and known,
stories our ancestors handed down to
us.
4 We will not hide these truths from our
children;
we will tell the next generation
about the glorious deeds of the LORD,
about his power and his mighty
wonders.
5 For he issued his laws to Jacob;
he gave his instructions to Israel.
He commanded our ancestors
to teach them to their children,
6 so the next generation might know
them— even the children not yet born—
and they in turn will teach their own
children.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

2 Timothy 2:1-2 (NLT)

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Think about someone who had a big impact on your life when you were young. Who were they, and how did they influence you?

Start sharing. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- Why do you think it’s so important for the church to support families and partner with parents in nurturing faith? How can our small group play a part in this, whether through prayer, service, or encouragement?
- **Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9.** How can this passage guide the way we approach family ministry? What are some ways we can live out this command in our own families or church community?
- **Read Psalm 78:1-6.** Why is it important to share stories of faith with younger generations? How might we as a group encourage one another to share these stories, either with our own children or with younger people in our church?
- The sermon emphasized the importance of daily rhythms—like meals, conversations, and bedtime—as opportunities for spiritual formation. What small changes in these daily routines could help bring God’s presence more fully into your home or family life? What are some ways our group could support each other in establishing these faith-building habits at home?
- Family ministry is about more than parents alone; it’s a community effort. How have you seen the church act as a “spiritual family” for children and youth? How can our small group contribute to creating a welcoming, supportive environment for families in our church?
- Why do you think involvement in church from a young age impacts long-term faith? What are some things our group can do to help foster this kind of enduring faith in the next generation?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Remember the idea of “lead small,” then identify and take your next step of leadership and spiritual growth.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, help us to obey your command to love you with all of our heart, soul and mind. And to obedient in telling the next generation about your glorious deeds, so that generation after generation may confess your Lordship and glory. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Question: "What should be the order of priorities in our family?"

Answer: The Bible does not lay out a step-by-step order for family relationship priorities. However, we can look to the Scriptures and find general principles for prioritizing our family relationships. God obviously comes first: Deuteronomy 6:5, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (cf. Matthew 22:34–40 and John 13:34–35). All of one's heart, soul, and strength is to be committed to loving God, making Him the first priority. Church membership and regular church attendance will be one way a family shows that God is first in their lives (see Hebrews 10:25).

If you are married, your spouse comes next. A married man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). Christ's first priority—after obeying and glorifying the Father—was the church. Here is an example a husband should follow: God first, then his wife. In the same way, wives are to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). The principle is that a woman's husband is second only to God in her priorities.

If husbands and wives are second only to God in our priorities, and since a husband and wife are one flesh (Ephesians 5:31), it stands to reason that the result of the marriage relationship—children—should be the next priority. Parents are to raise godly children who will be the next generation of those who love the Lord with all their hearts (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4), showing once again that God comes first. All other family relationships should reflect that.

Deuteronomy 5:16 tells us to honor our parents so that we may live long and so things will go well with us (see also Ephesians 6:1–4). No age limit is specified, which leads us to believe that as long as our parents are alive, we should honor them. Of course, once a child reaches adulthood, he is no longer obligated to obey them ("Children, obey your parents..."), but there is no age limit to honoring them. We can conclude from this that parents are next in the list of priorities after God, our spouses, and our children. After parents comes the rest of one's family (1 Timothy 5:8).

Following one's extended family in the list of priorities are fellow believers. Romans 14 tells us not judge or look down upon our brothers (v. 10) or do anything to cause a fellow Christian to "stumble" or fall spiritually. Much of the book of 1 Corinthians is Paul's instructions on how the church should live together in harmony, loving one another. Other exhortations referring to our brothers and sisters in Christ are "serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13); "be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32); "encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11); and "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24). Finally comes the rest of the world (Matthew 28:19), to whom we should bring the gospel, making disciples of Christ.

In conclusion, the scriptural order of priorities is God, spouse, children, parents, extended family, brothers and sisters in Christ, and then the rest of the world. While sometimes decisions must be made to focus on one person over another, the goal is to not be neglecting any of our relationships. The biblical balance is allowing God to empower us to meet all of our relationship priorities, inside and outside our families.

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