

## Family Values

Few would dispute the fact that marriage, home and the family have been under assault of late. The breakdown of the home is one of the most significant problems we face. There was a time in our history when family ties were close and solid, but that time has passed for many families. This is a problem we cannot afford to ignore.

What has caused the disintegration of the American family? Several factors are involved. Among them are: 1) the high divorce rate, 2) acceptance of alternate lifestyles (living together outside of marriage, homosexual unions), 3) rampant sexual immorality, 4) the mobility of society (the average family moves once every five years), 5) materialism (the belief that we need to have more has pulled young mothers out of the home and into the workforce), 6) the breakdown of traditional religious values. These factors and others are combining to destroy the traditional American family. Can anything be done?

The only solution is a return to the biblical framework for marriage and family. The home was the first institution ordained by God, and it was meant to be lasting (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 19:9). The home should be the center for spiritual, emotional and physical growth. It should be the place where love is nurtured and cultivated. It is the place where values are instilled. It is in the home that respect for God, country and fellow human beings is learned. Home is the heart of society. The ties that bind us to home and family must be strong and lasting. Couples must bring commitment to marriage. Children must be seen as precious gifts from God, and parents must make the sacrifices of time, talent and resources necessary to insure that they have a solid foundation upon which to build. **How can we expect our children to have values if we have none?**

There are no real government solutions to this crisis. In fact, part of the problem stems from the belief that it is government's role to baby-sit, feed, clothe, educate and provide healthcare for our children. What we really need is not more government programs, but more individual responsibility and accountability. In essence, **what we need are parents who will be parents and raise their children to be productive citizens.** The church can help in that regard, but not even the church can replace the home.

Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: "And where we love is home, home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts. The chain may lengthen, but it never parts." May God help us to build better homes.

*By Roger Rush*