

# FBC Today

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# Father's Appreciation Day

Did you know that in the Old Testament, the word Father "av" אב is the 34th most frequently used word? "Em" אִמּוֹת Mother is placed in the #204th place! I mean you could say it was because of the patriarchal culture that made male figures like fathers appear more frequently in the Bible and that is likely true. The frequency doesn't indicate that

fatherhood is more important than motherhood according to the bible (I don't think it is) but I do think it means fatherhood does play an important role in our human community and how we relate to God.

**NEXT  
WEEK'S  
SERMON**

Preacher  
**Arnold Lim**

**JUNE 23 2024**  
**The Gospel And  
the Gender  
Identity**

Matthew 19:1-12



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**If you are a father, a father's role itself is a ministry that God has gifted you. Ephesians 6:4 (NLT) summarises this ministry:**

***“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.”***

Some key points mentioned: The kids are to be raised with discipline and instructions from the Lord/Christ. Christian fathers are to teach the way of Christ, and his loving nature to the children by example and to correct them or discipline them when they deviate from the way of love into a hateful one. The act of teaching is to be balanced, without causing unnecessary anger and resentment from the child they are teaching. Of course, it doesn't mean there won't be frustrations and anger involved in the process of learning but the principle is similar to Romans 12:18 *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”* There must be the best or optimized effort to reduce the frequency of this anger and resentment from the child.

We have Biblical characters that were good examples of bad examples of fatherhood: Issac with his favoritism of Esau over Jacob, Jacob of his favoritism of Joseph (as a victim of favoritism why didn't he learn?!), prophet Eli although a respectable prophet himself raised (or didn't raise) two sons who end up engaging in illicit behaviors (1 Samuel 2:12), his successor prophet Samuel two sons who were greedy for money (1 Samuel 8:2-4), King David failed to protect his daughter Tamar who was raped by her half-brother Amnon. (2 Samuel 13).

If you have a functional father figure, you might be able to see glimpses of a good and perfect father figure on their best days. If you have lost your father, an absentee father figure, or no father figure, it may be harder for you to see it. I hope there were and are substitute father figures in your community, whether in church, uncle, or grandfather, who were able to fill that gap for you. However, all of us can relate to a father who has disappointed us, yet we (Christian men) are called to model good fatherhood to our kids (biological or spiritual). Without having a good model around us necessarily, the Bible guides us with God as a father model:

### **i) God wants us to relate to Him like a Father**

1 John 3:1 ESV

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Galatians 4:6 ESV

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

2 Corinthians 6:18 ESV

And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

### **ii) Relating to God not as slaves but sons**

Romans 8:15 ESV

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

### **iii) A father is compassionate**

Psalms 103:13 ESV

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

#### **iv) God may discipline you to guide you**

Hebrews 12:7 ESV

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

#### **v) God cares for and values us more than other creations**

Matthew 6:26 ESV

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

#### **Heavenly Father**

God is described to us in many ways, one of which is of a father. This article is a reminder to see and accept God as a Father figure in your life, in your prayers. Where an earthly father may fail you, know that our heavenly father won't. Seek, pray, and ask for good things, know that if you do not get what you want, God has something else in mind for you, you may not see his as good at the moment, but the outcome He has in mind is good. He sees things from an eternity point of view, He knows the butterfly effect of each action, and He decided the plan for you based on all the factors. This may look like you asking for Ramli beef burger and God gave you a steak. Or you asked for McDonald's, but God gave you salad instead. Either way, sometimes it's yummy and good, sometimes it's yucky but also good.

Matthew 7:9-11 ESV

*Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

#### **Earthly Fathers**

If you are a father, you are called to teach and guide your children in God's ways with fear and trembling. If you are a frustrated child, know that your father is an imperfect human who is (hopefully) figuring out how to do this, know that they may not necessarily have had a good fatherly model in their own lives so they are learning from scratch. Or they may be young in their Christian journey and have not worked out the implications of the faith in each aspect of their life. Remember also that it's their first time living on Earth too. If you do not have an earthly father figure, consider looking for one in your church community, we are called to be a family in Christ, it's not a "play pretend family" command. Older men in the church should look out for opportunities to minister to the younger generation, especially younger men as fatherly figures.

**Happy Father's Day to all fathers reading this article! Also, Happy Father's Day to God our Father! Today is the day to appreciate that God decided to adopt us and be our father! ;)**

I'll end the article with a prayer inspired by Jesus kor kor's (Brother Jesus') prayer in John 17:24-26 (NIV).

Father God, may those you have chosen see what Jesus sees and understand what Jesus understands about you as a father. Thank you for sending Jesus as Your representative, to make Your love known to us, and the Holy Spirit available to us so we can grow to be like You. Amen.



**by Toh Kai Xian**

*Kai Xian is a full time Ministry Staff at FBC and leads Gamma*



# Prayer for Fathers

*Our Father in heaven, on this day when fathers are being remembered and honored throughout the world, we honor You, the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.*

*“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” (1 John 3:1, ESV)*

*How amazing. We acknowledge that apart from Jesus Christ, we could only fall back in fear at the thought of approaching a God so holy, righteous, and just. But your Word says we did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15)*

*Because the sinless Savior died, our sinful souls are counted free. Our debt has been paid. We are no longer your enemies, but dearly loved children. Enable all those who have trusted in the atoning death and bodily resurrection of Jesus to live in the good of that reality.*

*Father, we thank you for the fathers among us: soon to be fathers, young fathers, middle age fathers, old fathers, and grandfathers. Thank you for their sacrifices and their desire to reflect your heart to their children. Make them aware of the privilege, gift, and responsibility of fatherhood. Cause them not to provoke their children to anger, but to lead them in your gracious discipline and instruction. Fill those who are weary with fresh strength for the task. May they know your Spirit’s power in their weakness.*

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for our fathers, whom You specifically chose for us, whether by natural birth or adoption. For those who had good fathers, we thank you for their example, their care, their counsel, their presence in our lives. May we honor them appropriately through our words and deeds.*

*For those who don’t have good memories of their fathers we pray they would be strengthened with power through your Spirit in their inner being, so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith— that they would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. We pray for patience to understand, mercy to forgive, and courage to stand fast in the truth of the gospel. For those fathers who are estranged from a child or children, or anyone who is unreconciled with their own father, would you bring to pass this promise in Malachi 4:6: ‘And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.’*

*For those who have never known their father, may they be more aware than ever that you are the ‘Father of the fatherless’ and that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*Jesus, thank you that you assured us of our heavenly Father’s care when you said, “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”” (Matthew 6:26)*