

## Mothers' Ministries

### Purpose:

1. To lift up the many ways mothers are important in their children's lives.
2. To recognize the importance of what mothers provide, even if not acknowledged.
3. To realistically point out some of the challenges a mother may face.
4. To believe that God is with her and will provide her with what she needs.

Is it not time we consider the gift God has given us which is the mother we have? When a congregation says that every member is a minister, doesn't this mean that we must surely look to the mothers in the congregation, as those who are the vital core of all that is happening? It is hard to imagine a world working, a church working, if there were no mothers. They are the unsung heroines of any congregation.

What has us say that? Has not God has built into the fabric of creation itself not only the importance of mothers but that all of human life would halt without them. Fortunately, the importance of mothers does not stop there. Even though we may overlook who they are and what they bring to us, this does not take away what each of us actually counts on. Mothers are in reality the heart and soul of a family. They are ministers because they love us as no other will ever love us. They spot and attend to the needs of their children. Their ministry to husband and children is what keeps their family functioning and healthy. This has to be happening for a congregation to come to a place where all members build up the body of Christ, the community of believers.

*Discussion Questions: We often take mothers and motherhood for granted. What causes that? If we decide not to take them for granted, what do we notice and see? Seek to name what mothers provide. Push yourselves to search out what is often overlooked.*

Having said that, what makes mothers so important today? There are two truths we can look at. One is that a mother can and is asked to be a wise, loving, and devoted person in her family. Many mothers are that. They seem to have eyes in the back of their heads as they manage so much of what is going on, by the grace of God. They manage the household, are present for their husband and children, are aware of things going wrong, and know what issues need to be addressed. They 'tend the sheep' and relate to their children in ways so that the children can talk to them about risky situations. They also speak to any disturbing problems in their household. They do all this without in many cases receiving any thanks, any acknowledgment, or any encouragement.

The second truth is that many listen to God. They know He is there to support them and give them the grace and wisdom they need to get through the day. Their ministry to others never ends. The many and varied problems around them never get completely handled. So much of what they bring to their families and therefore to their congregations never gets said, paid, or even noticed. Yet by God's grace, they keep going. Every mother on this planet is truly important and a gift from God to



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our world. They are a treasure and should never be slighted, but rather acclaimed and honored for who they are and what they provide.

*Discussion Question: Describe some of the things you see going on in a mother's life. What issues does she face? How do you see God providing through a mother for her children?*

It would be wonderful if all our mothers could be like the wife and mother in

Proverbs 31:10-31: In a culture like ours, is that going to happen? Unfortunately, it is not. First of all, many children are being influenced in a major way by media, social networking, and peers. A mother has real competition. Plus, she may be working outside the home and may not have the time and energy to be there for her children as she would like. Then there is the divorce problem; leaving about one-quarter of mothers to raise their children by themselves. Poverty and financial instability are staring many mothers in the face. As if all this were not enough, consider the problems we have today: kids being molested, entrapped in internet pornography, teenage pregnancy, chemical and gambling addictions, and domestic violence. They all add up to tragic heartache in the lives and spirits of many mothers. Their lives can be very messy and hard and it may begin to seem like a long dark tunnel with no light at the end, and no end to their problems. They may feel hopeless and helpless.

*Discussion Questions: What challenges are some mothers dealing with today that are often not talked about publicly? If someone witnessed a mother scolding her child in public, what could that person do? What kinds of things need to happen to enable a mother to be gentle and understanding?*

Has God and the Scriptures provided any answers to all this? Think of one person in the New Testament who had a very trying life. One is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Among her many trials was having to live with people who considered her shameful because she got pregnant out of wedlock. Another was just trying to understand her son, Jesus, when at twelve he stayed behind in Jerusalem, discussing the Old Testament with the teachers while everyone else was journeying home. He did not let his parents know what he was doing. Who was this boy of hers anyway? What really broke her heart was standing there watching him die an excruciating death on the cross. What anguish, what agony of soul! She might well have considered that all the love, tenderness, and patience she had brought to her son was being lost in this wretched painful end.

But no, we dare not leave the story there where many mothers would be tempted to leave it. Mary had a calling and she fulfilled it. She was faithful in what the angel in Luke 1 had asked her to do. She was humbled by the great honor she had been given. See her song of praise in Luke 1:46-55, as she realized the great mercy and benefits her life was bringing to the world. After Jesus was raised and ascended into heaven, she prayed with the disciples and others before the Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost Day (Acts 1:12-14). Later, she would see her son James become a great leader in the church (Acts 15:13-21).



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How many times do we not hear a famous athlete say it was his mother who supported him all through his childhood and beyond, no matter how many sacrifices she needed to make? Where would the world be if we did not have strong mothers?

What this is telling every mother is that your efforts, your heartaches, and your persistent love are not given in vain. God is working through you. Do what you can, while you can, and let God provide the increase. God is still working in the midst of messy and hurting lives. Find ways to pass on the faith to your children. Teach them. Help them be equipped and ready for the dangers and shenanigans in the world. Pray for them daily. They will be much impacted by your faithfulness, more than you might ever know. Proverbs 22:6 tells us to “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.”

*Discussion questions: Even with all the setbacks Mary experienced, what can one take away from her mothering and apply to one's own life? Did Jesus think we would have easy lives? See Matthew 11:28-30. How do you see life? Is it fair or unfair? Will there be many problems or will the problems be few?*

See the page: “Moms, What is the High Calling of Mothers?” This is not written to lay a great weight on a mother, but rather to provide a sense of direction into which she can grow with God's help. **If time permits, the class can go over this sheet and discuss it line by line. Mothers in the group can pick out three points they feel they are good at, and two that they could work on more and grow into.**

“All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.” — **Abraham Lincoln**

“A mother's arms are made of tenderness and children sleep soundly in them.” —**Victor Hugo**

“A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one else can take.” — **Cardinal Mermillod**

Summary:

1. To acknowledge mothers for what they mean to their families, to their congregations, and to society at large.
2. To realize mothers are often overextended and in need of much more support than they are being given.
3. To see motherhood as a great calling from God that requires compassion, patience, understanding, and wisdom. To look to God for the grace and strength to fulfill such a calling.
4. To grow in the abilities and skills needed to cope in an evil world. To find ways to pass on God's Word and importance to her children. To pray for her children daily.

Prayer Suggestions:

1. Thank God for the wonderful gift He has given us in our mothers.

<https://adultssavingkids.org> Office: 612-708-1875 Email: [info.adultssavingkids@gmail.com](mailto:info.adultssavingkids@gmail.com)



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2. For mothers dealing with hard issues that push them beyond their ability to cope.
3. For all mothers to lay their burdens down on Jesus, and to pray for their children.
4. For insight and awareness of fathers and children to honor the mother for who she is.