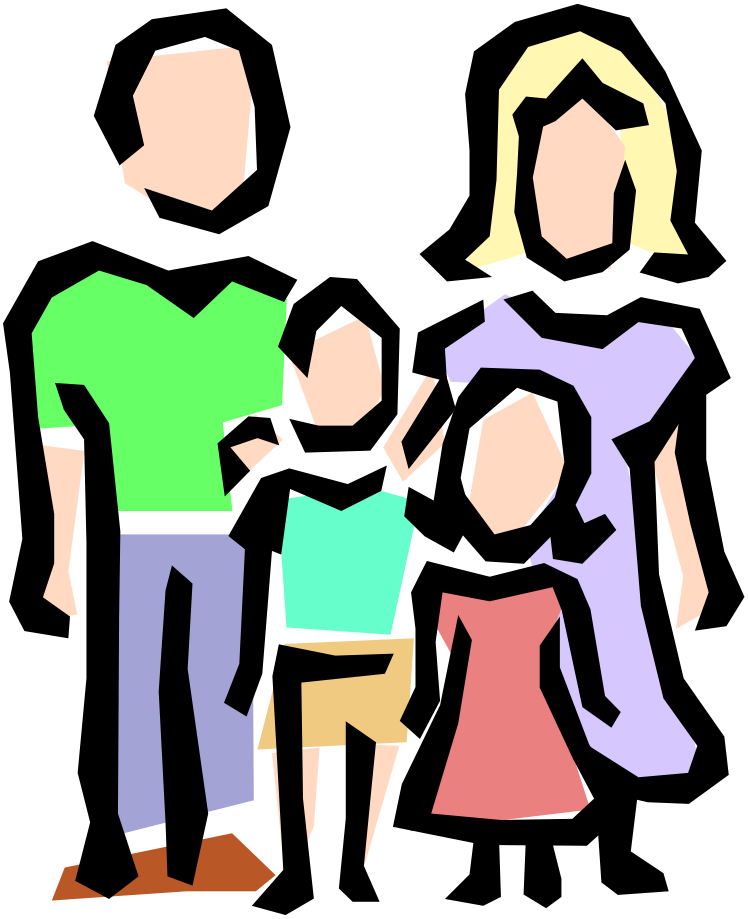
FOCUS

2010 Bible study series



Family

1. Honoring father and mother

Introduction.

In many cultures (especially non Western cultures) filial piety is considered a virtue. Respecting the elders or ancestors is important to that culture and often it controls how families in those cultures operate.

What are some indications of being influenced by filial piety? Here are some ways it can show itself today: Please tick the ones that apply to you.

- You feel you have a life-long duty to please your parents.
- You feel a strong obligation to fulfill your parents' expectations about your studies and career.
- You are not truly successful unless your achievements are appreciated by your parents.
- Your parents' expectations, and your desire for their approval motivate your pursuit for success.
- If you failed a subject, you would be more worried about your parents being disappointed than your own pride.
- If your father committed a crime, you would not feel guilty concealing it from the police.
- It means more to you than anything else that your parents think of you as a good son or daughter.

Do items on that list describe your experience?

For the Aussies amongst us, also share how you respond to these questions and as a group notice the difference between the two cultures.

How does it compare with what the Bible says about honoring our parents? What is different?

Search the Scriptures. (divide into pairs and do a passage each then report back to the group)

Read Gen 2: 20-25

What does this passage say about

a. relationship between man and woman

b. relationship between a man and his parents

Read Gen 15:1-5

Why was it important for Abraham to have a son ?

What is the value placed on male children in those times?

Deuteronomy 4:9-14, 6:1-3

What were the Israelites to teach their children?

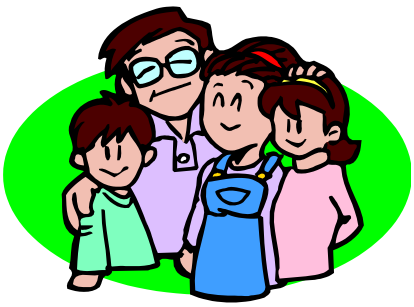
Exodus 20:12 (cf 21:17)

What does it mean to honor our parents ? In the context of Exodus 20:1-17 who is more important, God or parents? Give reasons.

Ruth 1: 1-13

What does this passage reveal about the value of sons and daughters in Jewish families?
How were sons treated ?

How were daughters treated ?



Read the following passages.
Proverbs 13:1,24,
Proverbs 15:5,20
Proverbs 17:6,25
Proverbs 20:20
Proverb 22:6

What do the passages say about the relationship between parent and child?

We have only sampled a small number of passages from the OT. But from these passages what can you learn about OT families in terms of the following :

a. What makes up a family unit?
b. What things are important in a family ?
c. The relationship between husband and wife
d. The relationship between parent and child

(Be careful to differentiate passages which describe the way things were and the passages which instruct how things should be).

How different are the teachings of the OT from the teachings of your culture ?

Summary.

How does this compare with the values within your own family ?

For example :
What are your family expectations of you?

What are your family duties and obligations?

How do you feel about these expectations ?

How much freedom or independence do you have from your parents?

Does “honor” have the same meaning as “obey” ?

What does it mean to honor your parents? How would you honor your parents (give specific examples or practical examples)

What does it mean to obey your parents?
How much do you obey?

When do you start being your own person?

Pray.