

THE FRACTURED FAMILY

Edited and adapted by P. Ribes from an article of Maria Nazareth

Intent of these jottings.

The pressures that society exerts on the family in metropolises like Bombay takes a heavy toll on family life

The first step to counteract such pressures is to become aware of them, next to discover their causes and, as far as possible, to apply the proper remedies.

1. INTRODUCTORY PRAYER SESSION

- Hymn: Bind us together.
- Prayer for the Family.
 - “Dearest Lord,
Of all the wondrous ways you speak to us
The first is the voice of our family
Thank you lord, for our family
Thank you for all we share
The joys and laughter, the tears and work
And for the unique gifts
Each one of us brings”.
- Spontaneous Prayer

2. SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION A Case Study

Moderator:

- ✓ *Divide the larger group into small groups of 6 to 8 members.*
- ✓ *Appoint a leader and a reporter for each small group.*
- ✓ *The Leaders will moderate the sessions. The reporters will write a short summary of the proceedings of their groups.*
- ✓ *Read to the participants the case -study below, alternatively, give them Xerox copies of it*
- ✓ *Next, , requests the participants to discuss it and reply to the following questions:*

CASE STUDY

“Sandra, a school teacher and her husband John, an executive in a computer company with their two children, David (8) and Alisha (10). live in a small flat in one of the Bombay suburbs.

On a typical day, Sandra wakes her husband, makes a quick break- fast for him and he rushes out for work at 7.20 a.m. She then wakes up the children makes their breakfast and all of them rush off to school.

After school she collects David and Alisha and takes them for tuition classes. While they are attending class she goes to the market to make her purchases for the day. They all return home by about 6.00 pm and while the

children are busy with their home-work and music practice, she prepares dinner for the family. Her husband returns home at 8.00 p.m. They have dinner together and after watching a T.v. Serial they go to sleep.

Questions for discussion in small groups :

1. What are the main pressures faced by each member of Sandra's and John's family?
2. What are the causes of such pressures in today's society?
3. What pressures do you and your family are facing? Give examples
4. What pressures an average family in your neighborhood is facing?
5. What are the harmful affects those pressures for you and for the other members of your family? Share your personal experiences.
6. Can you cope or not with them? Why?
7. How could we lessen them,? Give suggestions.
8. What concrete steps can you take as an individual to enrich your family life? Give suggestions

3. GENERAL GROUP SESSION AND NPUT :

General Sharing

Moderator

- ✓ *Request the small group - reps to share their reports with the house.*
- ✓ *Initiate a discussion on the main ideas brought up by the reps.*

Input by The Moderator

Reasons for the increasing pressures on family life

Both parents are working: Today women want to work because of the extra income involved, and the fulfillment they experience in their careers. This puts a tremendous strain on them to maintain both their roles in their home and outside.

Work Situations: Living in situations where men and women work in the same office and travel together etc. gives ample opportunity for various needs to be met outside marriage.

Equal Partners: Another source of conflict is that women today rightly reject the notion that the husband is like the 'Lord and Master' and the wife is the lesser partner in family..

Consumerism: The consumer-mentality and the need to be 'better than the other Joneses, demands that the family constantly increases its expenses and so, its earning capacity.

Media Mania: The proliferation of TV channels and increased viewing time to 24 hours , are now taking their toll on family life. In the name of the so-called entertainment, time which could otherwise be spent on sharing feelings and experiences amongst one another is wasted.

Low moral and human quality of the programs watched: he programs offered today portray distorted values of worldly success, wealth, greed, violence, pleasure, sex and broken marital life

Internet addiction. Internet may become addictive. It may take the interests of some family members away from the home, thus alienating them from the family. Internet addiction may turn some family members into sort of autistic personalities. .

Mobile phones make communication with outsiders and absentees easier and at the same more difficult with the closer members of the family.

Parent-Children Pressures: Parents put undue pressures on their children in various ways e.g. forcing academic excellence, tuitions, extra activities ,and fostering a vigorous and unhealthy competitive spirit.

Additional Pressures: Other factors like commuting long distances to work, getting admission for children in schools/colleges, getting suitable accommodation, coping with rising prices, with one parent working abroad – some times, unfortunately, both being out of the home..

5. PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Of all the wondrous ways you speak to us
The first is the voice of our family
Thank you lord, for our family
Thank you for all we share
The joys and laughter, the tears and work
And for the unique gifts
Each one of us brings.

Pardon us and heal us for our selfishness
We hurt each other
In words and deeds and silences
We need your healing each moment, lord
For without your constant care
How can we hold each other in love?

Source of all love; make us aglow with love
Thoughtful and caring, generous in forgiving
Joyful in service, open to give and receive.
May we treat one another
Always and every where
As members of your own family.
We make this prayer to you, father
Through Jesus Christ your son and the holy spirit, Amen.

Suggestions for Action

Each family has to work out its priorities.

- Spend time together as a family
- Pray together e.g. family rosary, Bible reading and sharing.
- Take up common projects
- Family celebrations, like birthdays, anniversaries, happy events,
- Share the events of the day
- Common exercises
- Family meals together, at least dinner!
- Share household chores
- Family outings and vacations.
- Reviewing your budget. Do both spouses need to work full-time?