

REVIVING THE HEARTS OF FATHERS

A SUNDAY FAMILY DEVOTION (21 JUNE 2020)

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Call your family together for a Family Devotion. (The time you would have gone to church) Set 60-90 minutes aside for Praise and Worship, Word Reading and Study, Prayer and Breaking of Bread. Encourage the involvement of every family member. The outline below will assist you.

Introduction

Our focus and priority as Christian Centre, Abbotsford is to build a Biblical Gospel-Centred Kingdom Community. A relational network where we all belong, care for one another, grow together and encourage one another as we intentionally proclaim and demonstrate Kingdom life at our places of work and where we have social connections and influence. As disciples of Jesus we want to be fishers of men. We need a vibrant Kingdom Family, a community where those we reach for Christ can belong and grow in Christ.

Lockdown has provided us with an opportunity to put in place what is lacking. We are looking forward to meeting in one another's homes and get the ball rolling.

In the meantime, ...

All of us are focusing on the two essential building blocks that make for healthy communities:

1. The Priesthood of every believer. (Make sure to listen to my video message – 14 June 2020)
2. Healthy Kingdom Families. Parents and guardians take the primary responsibility to disciple their children in God's ways.

Today is Father's Day. Fathers play a key role as culture builders. We honour and celebrate the calling and assignment of every father.

The Lord wants to spark a revival in the hearts of the Fathers and "turn their hearts".

Malachi 4:5-6 ESV *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. (6) And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."*

The Meaning of Revival

When the word "revival" is used, it is most often used in the context of church members becoming "filled with the spirit" so that the church can be more effective in the community. The word revival can have several shades of meaning. Revival can also mean rehabilitation, renewal, recovery, and adjustment. The important factor about all true spiritual revivals is that it is not just an event, it is a process. Therefore, revival takes time and energy and a willingness to change. True revival is first in the privacy of a person's heart.

Revival is a Heart Message

During one of Scotland's great revivals in the early eighteen hundred's, a tourist visited to see what the revival was all about. The news about what was happening in Scotland spread far and wide. Upon arriving off the boat, the tourist started looking for the gigantic revival meetings. He went to the churches, but they were closed. "Where is the great revival," he asked someone while passing? With a sincere look in his eye, and pointing with his finger to his heart, the man responding to the question said, "It's in here." The tourist

could not find the revival at street meetings, or large rallies. Instead, the revival could only be seen in the daily lives of the people. Their attitudes, habits, and lifestyles.

Family Revival

Personal revival is what is needed to take place to change the world. The personal revival will then influence the most important ministry on earth – the family. When revival is in the family, changes are transforming and permanent.

Harrold Richards writes about the subject with these words *"The family is the first unit that God created, right after He created Adam, and well before government or even church. It is logical that revival must move from the personal to the family level. The ones we live with daily know us best and will sense what is happening in our lives. Remember, in revival far more is caught than is taught. In other words, your family will learn more from your example than from your exhortations."*

Personal Revival: "Revive ME..." one believer walking in the Spirit. Isa. 57:15; Ps. 119-88; Eph. 5:15-18

Inter-personal Revival: "Revive US..." a group of believers walking in the Spirit. Ps. 85:6; Rom. 13: 10-14.

Collective Revival: "Revive THY WORK..." church collectively walking in the Spirit. Hab. 3:2; Eph. 3:14-21.

Revival is the renewal of the first love of believers, resulting in the awakening and conversion of unbelievers to God.

Scripture for Prayer

"Create in me [us] a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me [us]. Do not cast me [us] away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me [us]. Restore to me [us] the joy of Your salvation and sustain me [us] with a willing spirit. THEN I [we] will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted (turned back) to You." Psalm 51:10-13

"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! (16) So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. (17) For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. (18) I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. (19) Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. (20) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:15-20

When Revival is Needed (adapted from Charles Finney's list)

1. When there is no conviction of sin among sinners, either in the church or in the world. When there are few heart-rending conversions.
2. When sinners are completely unaware of hell and are unconcerned about their fate.
3. When there is criticism and condemnation/scoffing and scolding of sinners among believers. This reveals a lack of Christ's compassion for their lost condition, and a lack of faith and prevailing prayer for their plight.
4. When there is want of brotherly love and integrity among Christians.

5. When few are labouring in prayer. When prayer has been relegated to a "certain few" and the church has veered from the purpose which Christ gave it: *"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."*
6. When there are dissensions, jealousies, criticism, and evil speaking among believers. These things show that Christians have gotten far from God.
7. When there is a worldly spirit in the church – displayed in dress, seeking worldly amusements, excesses in eating and buying, pleasure, and focus on money and things more than the Word of God. When the church is overawed with outward appearances, and personal kingdom building.
8. When the church finds members falling into gross and scandalous sins. When the enemies of God have reason to reproach the church, it is time to ask, *"What will become of Your great Name?"*
9. When there is a spirit of controversy in the church or land.
10. When the wicked triumph over the church, and talk about wickedness is callous and cold, in an unfeeling way. When there is hopelessness when speaking about the state of the world and the church.
11. When the church is powerless and cold. When the power and presence of the Lord are seen minimally.
12. When a lack of joy characterises the church.

"If we need to be revived it is our duty to be revived."

Practical Application

Fathers speak to your families. Make a fresh commitment to love and lead them in God's ways.

Pray for fathers to be revived. If the father is present, let everyone gather around him to honour him with words of appreciation, affirmation, and encouragement. Lay hands on him and bless him.

If he is not around, pray for him anyway. Pray for fathers in general. Pray for young men who are still to become fathers.