

James Dobson's Son: The Texas Church Shooting Proves Why Your Church Needs a Safety Plan

Many Americans recently woke up to the shocking news that a gunman killed two people in a Sunday morning church service before being shot by church security.

Parents today face threats to the safety and security of their families that were never even dreamed of by past generations. Most of our parents never thought to teach us critical skills like situational awareness or how to handle an active shooter situation. Church shootings were virtually unheard of.

I grew up in a different kind of family.

It was in the early 1980s when my dad came home to tell me his pastor friend had been shot and killed by a mentally disturbed congregation member. In those days, my family was the first I knew of with a high-tech home security system. My father—Dr. James Dobson—had taken a very public stance against pornography and gambling, and we started to receive death threats from folks in organized crime who stood to lose money if he were successful. Eventually, we had armed security guards travelling with us, and we were taught from an early age to be security-minded.

We learned to assess a room for entrances, exits and choke points, to notice if someone was following us while driving and what to do if trouble did strike. My wife would tease me when we were first dating for always sitting with my back against the wall with views of entrances and exits. She's learned over time, I'm practicing "situational awareness," knowing your surroundings and what to do in case of an

incident.

Knowing what I know, I became more and more concerned about the safety of other families. One day, I was telling a close friend about this, and he challenged me, "Why don't you do something about it?"

That's why—in partnership with Cove Home Security—I founded HomeSafe, a church-based training program designed to empower families with tools to immediately address a myriad of threats to their children.

Only 25% of all churches in America have any type of security. And even those who have sophisticated security teams will tell you they can't protect you and your family. Only you can do that.

Watching the video of the shooting in White Settlement, Texas, I could tell immediately that virtually no one in that congregation, bar the security team, had any idea what to do when the bullets started flying. All credit and praise go to their security team, who tragically lost two of its members. Their quick action saved countless lives.

But, we have to ask ourselves, what would the outcome have been otherwise?

The answer is many bodies. At the end of the short YouTube video, virtually the entire church is still frozen in their seats, trying to comprehend what is happening. It was over in six short seconds, and I can tell you if I were there, my wife, Laura, and I would have been out the door in three. We have talked through scenarios like this before. We have trained with our kids what to do if this happens to us. The last time you want to have this conversation with your family is when the shots ring out.

You, and all of us, need to change our mentality and get prepared. And fast. Hoping this doesn't happen to your family

is not a plan.

Parents need to talk to and prepare their children for mass shootings, but also for online pornography, online predators, abuse, human trafficking and other real threats. I cover all of these topics and more in teaching HomeSafe, and you would not believe the relief parents experience when they have been fully trained, are armed with a plan and are ready to protect their family and the other families in their church.

We all have auto insurance, homeowners insurance, life and health insurance; some people even have pet insurance, but what are you doing to protect your family from the litany of threats? Let's not let this moment come and go away with no action. Like Nehemiah in ancient times, we live in a time where we must build our homes with one hand while having a sword at the hilt, ready to be deployed at any moment. {eoa}

Ryan Dobson, *the son of Focus on the Family Founder Dr. James Dobson, is the creator of HomeSafe, a church-based program training parents to protect families from threats to their safety and security.*