

Samuel Rodriguez: 4 Good Things Fathers Must Do for Their Children

As Father's Day 2021 approaches, I can't help but reflect on the many incredible fathers I have the privilege of knowing, particularly those who stand committed to serving our heavenly Father. I am blessed to have an amazing father, and I am blessed to be a father to amazing children.

As fathers, we are automatically leaders. But not all men in this position choose to lead well. It takes an intentional commitment to putting our families first in our lives. It requires sacrificial love. Many men don't make this commitment and instead lead by indecision, taking their families down a damaging path.

We have an incredible responsibility to our children. They rely on us for basic necessities, but they also look to us to teach them what matters in life. Whether we realize it or not, our children will mimic the way we talk to and treat the people around us, how we manage stress and what we prioritize.

With this in mind, over time I have come to believe that there are four things every father should do well. Fathers who desire to raise children who thrive spiritually, mentally and physically have a responsibility to provide, protect, pray and play with their children.

Father Provide

Of course, we have an obligation to provide our children with the things they need: a roof over their heads, food, clothing, an education and so on. But great fathers provide their children with more than these basic needs. They also amply supply them with encouragement, opportunities and wisdom. They

give them one-on-one attention and a listening ear. Good providers freely give their children grace.

We see the ultimate example of a father who provides in our heavenly Father. The apostle Paul writes in First Timothy, “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17, ESV).

Let us be the kinds of fathers who richly provide our children with everything they will need to be successful individuals, and ultimately, devoted followers of Christ.

Fathers Protect

Providing for our children is only half the battle; we also must protect them from the things of this world. Culture will attempt to persuade our children to believe all sorts of wild lies dressed up as “truth” or “progress.” We intervene by teaching and modeling biblical truth.

In Psalm 91:2b, the psalmist refers to the Lord as, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” When we protect our children well, we don’t just steer them away from danger, but we also steer them toward safe places. Let’s steer our children toward the fortress of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do this in part by first demonstrating that we run toward Him in our own moments of anxiety or confusion.

The way to protect our children from the evil things they will inevitably encounter is not to shield them from the world altogether. Instead, we equip them with the armor of God so they are protected no matter the battles they face.

Fathers Pray

When our earthly fathers make our heavenly Father priority, families thrive. And how do we make our heavenly Father a

priority? We do this by getting on our knees. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 encourages us to “pray without ceasing.” Prayer is a part of remaining intimately connected with God.

Our children need us to set the example. They will follow our lead. They won’t always listen to what we say, but they will often copy what we do. By praying for them and in front of them, we show our children where our help comes from. They will come to understand that our heavenly Father is there to listen and guide.

Fathers Play

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones (Prov. 17:22).

It is a weighty responsibility to care for and raise up prosperous children, but this role doesn’t require us to be serious all the time. As our heavenly Father delights in us, we can delight in our children.

We invest in our children’s happiness when we play with them. Stress can creep into the minds of even our littlest ones, but when we take time with our children to do the things they enjoy, we can help them to release their stress and anxieties.

As our children shower us with homemade cards and funny socks this Father’s Day, let’s remember the awesome opportunity we have to set them up for success. And let’s continue to look to the Lord, our perfect example, for wisdom and guidance each day. {eoa}

Rev. Dr. Samuel Rodriguez is president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, executive producer of Breakthrough with 20th Century Fox and a bestselling author. CNN and FOX News have called him “the leader of the Hispanic Evangelical movement” and TIME magazine nominated him among the 100 most influential leaders in America. His newest book is From Survive to Thrive.

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