

Is Facebook Subtly Devaluing Family Values?

You probably heard about the church pastor that mandated his church leaders stop using Facebook. Well, that was even before new default settings for family that demote children, spouses and parents to the bottom of the page while elevating friends to the top.

Some parents find the latest Facebook change disconcerting, including Marnie Swedberg, author of *SANE: Social Networking Success in 15 Minutes a Day*.

“Facebook has had a wonderful family first policy until now, a policy that has helped families stay foremost in each others’ minds when on the website by posting family members in the most prominent position,” Swedberg says. “This policy has been reversed.”

Families on Facebook make up much of its 500 million users, half of whom log in every day. As Swedberg sees it, Facebook is impacting our culture—and what happens on Facebook has the potential to change things in the world of face-to-face. By demoting the visibility of family, and promoting the position of friends, she feels Facebook is communicating a subtle change in values.

“Facebook family connections happen every second of every day,” says Swedberg. “I have three young adult kids myself and I like to see them every chance I get, even on Facebook. More importantly, I want to communicate that they rank number one in my world both on- and off-line.”

The good news is that it is easy to re-position your family first on your personal Facebook profile page. Simply follow these steps:

1. Login to your Profile Page.
2. On the left bar, identify the word “Friends” or “Family” under your photo.
3. Click on the editor’s pencil icon that appears when you mouse over one of those words.
4. Find “Featured Friends.”
5. Left click on the word “Family” and drag it above “Friends.”
6. Save.

Are you hooked up with your church family—and your real family—on Facebook? Is Facebook a valuable tool for evangelizing? What are your thoughts?