

Luke 2:1-20
“The Holy Family”
Saturday December 24th, 2016

This is the holy family.



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And this too. Along with all in this Congregation.



I believe all would agree the first family is “the holy family” because it is Jesus’ family, but some may be surprised, or dubious about the others. But I want to assure you, these are all holy families, and I will get to this shortly.

First of all, I want to say thanks to all the parents, grandparents, guardians and friends who have brought children and youth to this service. It is part of why these families that you saw and actually your family is a holy family.

All of these are holy families because God's presence is in them. God sanctified them, which is a big word for "made holy" by coming into these families. That is easy to see in the case of Jesus' family because of course in Jesus **"all the fullness of God was caused to dwell."** But how about these other families, and your family? How are they holy?

In the Old Testament the story is told of Moses and the Burning bush. Moses was just wandering around watching his sheep wander around eating from place to place when he saw a bush on fire.



The weird thing about that bush was that as it burned it was not consumed. It did not burn up. So Moses, being a curious man, went over to look at this curious sight. When he got to the burning bush God spoke to him and said, **"Take off your shoes for this is holy ground!"**

Now what made that ground holy? It was just desert sand. Well what made it holy was God's presence. Wherever God is present, and in whatever, including whoever God is present, that person, place or thing is made holy.

God sanctified, made holy the family by coming into it in such a special way with Jesus. (Jesus' name in fact means "God saves.") And he is "Emmanuel", which means "God with us." Jesus Christ's presence and God coming into the world through a baby, in a family, underscored the holiness of the family in general.

And for Christian parents that holiness is even deeper. Jesus said, **"That wherever two or three are gathered in my name there am I in their midst."** If you have two Christian believers together you also have a third who is Christ.

In fact, I would say, that **two believers who come together in the covenant of marriage form the smallest church here on earth.** Christ is there because two believers are there and then as time passes and age

and ability are present, God brings new members into that tiny church. They are called children!

You parents then become the priest and priestess for these children. Their Christian faith depends on your example and teaching. Their souls and eternal destination are your responsibility. That's a heavy, most important responsibility, but you can meet it, because you are not alone. Christ is present with you through the Holy Spirit in your family, because remember again what Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there I am in the midst of them?"

Parents are the most important Christian educators of their children. A child's first image of God is based on their image of their parents. As 1 John 4:19 says, **"We love because God first loved us."** Our children learn to love God by parent teaching and example. They basically learn about the inward nature of God, which is love, by the love they experience at home.

Worship, Sunday School, VBS, Music Camp, and youth groups, support parents in raising their children in faith, but the absolute primary and most important person or persons are their parents and in some cases grandparents.

I won't go into statistics and studies I have read; but the primary indicator of future faith and practice for children is the participation in faith and church by fathers and father figures.

So, read the Christmas story to your children this Christmas Eve, or day.



Read the Bible to your children.



Have an evening Bible prayer time.



Be thankful at meals.



Take your children to church and let them see you worshiping God, supporting God's church and you will invite God into your family.



Your family will be sanctified, made holy and move together from this life to life eternal.

In Jesus' name, Amen!