

# Roles and Responsibilities

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## INTRODUCTION

Let us consider the roles and responsibilities God has assigned to the home and the church. In some ways, they are very similar; in other ways, they are distinct. Duties specifically assigned to one should not be transferred to the other.

## THE HOME

Husbands are the head of the family, while wives serve in a submissive and supportive role (Eph. 5:25-33; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Tim. 5:14-15; Titus 2:3-5). Both diligently labor to provide resources for the family to fulfill its obligation (2 Thess. 3:10-13; 1 Tim. 5:7-8; Prov. 31:13-16, 24).

Parents provide for the various needs of their children. Physical necessities, such as food, clothing, and shelter, must be supplied (Prov. 19:14; Luke 11:11-13; 2 Cor. 12:14). Fathers also take a leading role in providing spiritual instruction and discipline for their children (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:4; Heb. 12:7-11). Mothers also should impart words of wisdom (Prov. 1:8-9; 31:1, 26; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).

Children should honor and obey their parents (Prov. 6:20-23; Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20).

## THE CHURCH

Elders oversee the local congregation in which they are members (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). Deacons serve various needs of the church, acting under the direction of the elders (Phil. 1:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).

Regarding those individuals appointed to serve tables in Acts 6:1-6 (Greek: *diakoneō*, “to serve, minister,” from *diakonos*, “a servant, minister”), Stephen and Philip were also effective evangelists/preachers, holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (Acts 6:8-10; 8:4-6; cf. 1 Tim. 3:8-9).

Members of the church, i.e., those who have joined themselves to a local band of disciples (Acts 9:26-28), must be active, each contributing to the well-being of the whole (1 Cor. 12:14-26; Eph. 4:11-16).

## **SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

Both the home and the church are responsible for spiritual instruction. Each should be involved in evangelism, and also in the related work of edification. Consider the example of Aquila and Priscilla, who were individually active (Acts 18:1-3, 18, 24-26), and who opened their house to the brethren, providing a place for the disciples to assemble (Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19).

Both the home and the church are involved in benevolence; yet, individual obligations in this regard are broader, involving one's neighbor, and mankind in general (Gal. 6:10; James 1:27); in contrast, the church's duty entails coming to the aid of needy saints (Acts 4:32-35; 1 Cor. 16:1-4).

The home has additional responsibilities, involving family relationships, which cannot be transferred to the church. These include the obligation of earning a living (Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 4:9-12), and providing for the physical needs of one's extended family (1 Tim. 5:3-16). Providing meals, social activities, and practicing hospitality are not the work of the church, but rather the responsibility of the home (1 Cor. 11:17-22; Heb. 13:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:9).

## **CONCLUSION**

Recognizing the similarities, and respecting the differences, may we fulfill our obligations in both the home and the church. If you are part of a loving physical family, you enjoy manifold blessings and benefits.

Are you a member of the Lord's church, which is God's spiritual family? Concluding his discussion of the family relationship of husbands and wives, Paul said, "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32). God is our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ our Elder Brother, and we are brethren, one of another (Rom. 8:14-17).