



GROUP ICE BREAKER

How many TV dad's can you name, and who is your favorite?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week? How did it go?

- I will find a regular time to meet God in the Bible.
- I will devote myself to community and accountability.
- I will join a small group where I can develop deep relationships.
- I will spend time in ordinary conversation with God.
- I will devote myself to spending time in prayer.
- I will walk through my days looking for Spirit-prompted opportunities to serve.
- I will share my life with others.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Men often wrestle with, even if they're physically present, actually being present as a father, doing something more than just showing up. And never before has there been a day or a culture in which fathers have faced greater obstacles than in our day.

There are a few myths about fatherhood that keep fathers from being fully home. Myth 1: Fathers are optional relationships. If you're a dad — you are indispensable to the life of your child, because God planned it this way. Myth 2: The workplace has changed to meet the needs of the new father. We still live in an achievement oriented world that doesn't reward men for what kind of a father he is. Myth 3: I will receive regular feedback on how I'm doing as a father. Oftentimes there will be long stretches of where you have no idea how you're doing.

There are also some things you can do to win at the fatherhood game. The first one is, learn to love the journey. This is difficult because many men tend to be outcome-oriented, but childhood is all about the journey. The second thing is: understand your unique gifts as a father. God has not put you where you are by accident, and you have something to offer your child based on who you are. And finally: open your heart to your child. Find ways to value your child and make sure that your child feels loved. And whoever your dad may be, or may have been—there is a God in Heaven and He is so filled with love and tenderness towards you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion, what are some of the obstacles that fathers face in today's culture?
2. A well known celebrity was quoted as saying, "Men are pinch-hitters." Why would fathers be viewed as optional relationships?
3. Read Ephesians 6:4. What is the role of fathers in the spiritual growth of their children? Why do you think this was addressed to fathers specifically? Was this modeled for you by your father?
4. Discuss the idea that you can balance work and family life. Is that possible? What are the challenges to finding balance?
5. If you're a parent, what's the greatest feedback you've received about your parenting? What's the most difficult you've received? What was the result of both/either on your parenting?
6. If you're a parent, have you learned to love the journey? Why or why not? If you're not a parent, do you feel your father loved the journey? Why or why not?
7. Often, the gifts that a father brings to raising children is different than a mothers. Make a list of the unique gifts that fathers have to offer. Why are these gifts important to the development of a child?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will learn to love the journey of fatherhood.
- I will contribute my gifts to the development of my children.
- I will find ways to value and express love to my children.
- I will find ways to value and express love to my father.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Ephesians 6:4