

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **January 21st**

#### **Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. Winter has hit hard. If you could go vacation anywhere right now, where would you go?

#### **Bible Study Questions**

1. How was discipline handled in the home that you grew up in?
2. Read Ephesians 6:4: Paul commands parents to “bring” up their children. This is the word for “nurture”. How does it impact parenting to view the role as “nurturing?”
3. We are to bring our children up in the training and instruction of our Lord. Training is the word for discipline. What comes to your mind when you think of the word “discipline?”
  - Read Hebrews 12:4-11. What do these verses teach about discipline?
  - These verses talk about punitive discipline, but verse 7 seems to be referring to a difficult circumstance that God is putting them through to make them stronger. In your life, are there any “disciplines” or challenging things that you do to help achieve a certain goal?
4. Pastor Michael talked about creating disciplines, or practices, in the home that help encourage spiritual formation. Are there any practices that your family has? Any that you want to start?
5. Ephesians 6:4 tells fathers to not exasperate their children. What does that command mean to you?
6. Parents need to choose their battles wisely. How do you discern whether a battle is worth fighting?

7. The ancient world routinely sacrificed their own children in able to gain blessings from the gods. How do parents today sacrifice their children’s well being for their own benefit?
8. Why is it some important for us to make the sacrifice to pass our faith onto the next generation? Any ideas on how our church can better do that?

## January 21st Setting Up the Shot

Over the past two weeks, we have established that the goal of a Christian home is to be an environment that cultivates Christ followers. Last week we looked at the power of example. The way that parent's live out their faith can either be a stumbling block from someone following Christ or can spire them toward Christ. Today, we are going to be doing a deep dive into one of the most well known Bible passages on parenting, Ephesians 6:4

- I. A parent's job is to nurture the spiritual health of their children:** Paul commands fathers to "bring up" their children in the training and instruction of the Lord. The word bring up is the same word used for nurture. It applies a relationship with care.
  - a. Create disciplines, or practices, that cultivate spiritual formation:** The word "training" is the word for "disciplines". We often think about punitive discipline, but the word is far more than that. Discipline includes practices such as exercise or studying that helps us reach a goal. In Hebrews 12:4-11, it talks about God disciplining his children. Clearly some of this is referring to punitive discipline. But passages such as verse 7 suggest that God is giving them hardship in order to strengthen them. The point is that parents should seek practices, including punitive discipline, that are spiritually formative. One example is a family meal time in which children are taught how to live in community. Other examples may be serving together or a family devotional time.
  - b. Put your children in settings where they can learn about faith:** Sharing the Christian faith is the primary job of parents. The church though is a resource that they can use to help teach their kids. Parents who feel unqualified to teach their kids can invite their children to learn with them.
- II. Do not exasperate your children. Choose your battles wisely:** Ephesians 6:4 tells fathers not to exasperate their children. One key way that parents do this is by wrongly choosing battles. There are important battles to fight for, but when a parent chooses the wrong battles they risk destroying the relationship in the process. Parents need to discern what battles are critical to the spiritual formation of their children.
- III. Remember that passing the faith to the next generation is worth the sacrifice:** In the ancient world, parent's routinely sacrificed their old children to the gods believing they would be

blessed as a result. God however ordered his people not to take part in this practice. Instead, parents were to pour into their children in order to pass the faith onto the next generation. Sadly, the Israelites often ignored this resulting in generations who did not know God (Judges 2:10) Building up our children involves sacrifice. The result is seeing God work in the lives of the next generation. It is a treasure that far outweighs our sacrifice.