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Keine Stimmen

Family Youth Group



For a long time the church of F. has regularly made interesting meetings for the family members of the youth and teenagers. Everyone is invited - "family" is not seen so much genetically as "spiritually".

The family is a family

Everyone is invited to be part of the "family of God" . Here even singles, grannies, neighbor kids, single mothers feel ... feel comfortable. The meetings are organized by families or small teams from the community. The focus is not on perfect organisation, not on a stylish programme, but on fellowship, games, fun, conversations, spontaneity, mutual service, encouragement and sharing.

Fall - the parking trap

Mark (changed name), 16 years old, until recently completely inconspicuous. Talented footballer, average commercial high school student, former youth athlete, ... this image bursts like a soap bubble with the unexpected call from the police: "Your son has been caught with a stolen moped for the second time!" As if struck by lightning, this bad news slays the mother's voice. This can't be true! - Sure, Mark had been getting into more and more trouble over the past few weeks. His grades were getting worse. And then there were always those weird guys asking about him. He'd go skateboarding with them or hang out in the park for hours. He didn't want to go to church for a long time. - "I'll be right down to the station to pick him up!" the dazed mother replies. But before she leaves, she calls Juergen (name changed). Jürgen is not just a teen leader. Rather, he is: to him the teens still trust. They send him text messages. He's the one they go to when they're in trouble. He is the one who accepts them for who they are. He is the one who seeks them out where they are: in smoky bars, on the football pitch, at school or even at the police station! Many a teenager has spent a weekend with him and been able to talk out his frustrations. He is the one who mediates between teen and parents. Not in a "ladder function" - *what he does, he does out of genuine love for them*. The only condition: the teens have to want the relationship with him. Jürgen wants to help them formulate their wounds, disappointments, problems, etc. and not just drown or vent. His time commitment to the teen meeting is small compared to these personal counseling sessions. Jürgen is not a newly minted teen leader. Soon to be 40, he has a lot of experience. The parents appreciate his competent helpfulness as much as the kids. He even invented the "Mothers' Coffee Meeting", to which he regularly invites concerned mothers. There, many a question and worry can be exchanged and encouragement refuelled.

Jürgen is, for me, a rare example of how youth/teen ministry doesn't get stuck in program shoes. His ministry could hardly be done by an average young leader. And yet the longer the more he becomes necessary - *yes downright an indispensable must for our youth work.*More than ever we need not programs, but street workers, mediators (intermediaries e.g. between parents and kids) and catch-all

places for our kids. More than ever, we are forced to dive into the context of our young people / teens to help them along. We are forced to start a dialogue with their parents, teachers, friends, ... It is obvious that for this comprehensive task the team of leaders is mostly overstrained. Even Jürgen would be if he did not maintain various relationships with specialized agencies. In the following I would like to point out a kind of extension of the Jungschar work, which partly meets the above-mentioned need: ***the family Jungschar***.

Winning whole families for the kingdom of God

For a long time the church F. has regularly made interesting meetings for the family members of the youth and teenagers. Everyone is simply invited - "family" is not seen genetically so much as "spiritually". Everyone is invited to be part of the "family of God". Even singles, grannies, neighbourhood kids, single mothers ... feel comfortable. The meetings are organized by families or small teams from the community. Not perfect organization, not a styled program, but community, play, fun, conversations, spontaneity, serving each other, encouraging and sharing are the focus.

Interestingly, the desire for an intact family has been on the rise again in Western countries in recent years. Family services are becoming in. The church of Jesus must face this demand anew. For too long it has given room to the zeitgeist of individualism. For too long it has unilaterally promoted age groups, and here and there it has unintentionally weakened the family. Too much parental responsibility has been delegated to the community.

I firmly count God's blessing as we begin to be more family oriented. Our church or community should be totally attractive to families. The Holy Spirit needs to reveal to us anew what this might look like in detail. We lack wisdom and role models. I bring some seemingly absurd ideas in the practical section with a challenge not to pick them apart but to sow them.

A family-centered Jungschar seems to me to play a crucial role here - it is the natural bridge from family to church. I firmly believe that a congregation would gain enormously by living more as a "***great family***" within itself. By this I mean to suggest that I am not just concerned with the welfare of individual families - I am aware that families are only one part. Central is the "***family thinking***" in the church. All members belong to this family!

- Where are the opportunities of the family taken advantage of?
- Where does the church program take the family into consideration?
- Where does the community practically support the family?
- Where does the congregation weaken or even burden family life? Where does it separate family members?
- What is the place of prayer for sanctified families?
- How do we bear the aftermath of the anti-family environment (single-parent families, divorces, ...)?
- Where and how are there tensions between families or between families and individuals?
- Why do we not baptize children until they are teenagers or invite them to communion until after the so-called classes?
- Where are family issues addressed in the family circle?

Strongly developed sense of family is something the Bible calls a mark of the Lord's family. When one part of the body is hurt or affected by anything, it affects the whole body. That is why "visiting the sick" and participation for those in need are to be interpreted very broadly - and we should know when someone needs a plate of soup, a pitcher of orange juice, or a friend to go get the medicine or stay with the baby when the father visits the mother in the hospital. The Lord's larger family is supposed to care for each other and have a sense of each other's sore spots. That's the whole point of "one bearing another's burdens" and the whole point of the "fellowship" of a church family.

(Edith Schaeffer, Family Habitat p. 89)

Source reference

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