

Role Models

Principle –Parents are automatically primary role models for their own children, however others in the wider body of Christ also have an important role.

Key Scripture:

Deuteronomy 11:18-19 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **Teach them to your children**, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust **to** reliable **men** who will also be qualified **to teach** others.

Titus 2:2 Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Titus 2:3-5 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

1 Timothy 4:12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an **example** for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

John 13:15 I (Christ) have set you an **example** that you should do as I have done for you.

1 Corinthians 11:1 **Follow my example**, as I (Paul) follow the example of Christ.

Comment on Scripture

Parents have the primary responsibility for teaching their children the truths of Scripture and righteous living. The Deuteronomy passage emphasises that this is a continuous task, occurring as part of everyday living – today we call it “mentoring” or “coaching”. God understands that we are inclined to reflect the behaviour of those around us and therefore urges his people to be good examples of godly men and women (ie role models). This is to be encouraged by teaching, but more importantly by living such behaviour. As a general principle, Scripture encourages the younger to look to the older generations for good role models, but as was the case with Timothy, a godly young role model is also possible. Jesus set the perfect example of the obedient Son, and Scripture encourages us to follow his example but he was never a parent, employee, grandparent etc. I believe Scripture encourages us to look to the example of others who have filled these roles in a godly way to learn from them as well.

Application in daily life??

- ♦ Children will inevitably reflect their parents behaviour and values – both good and bad. When we see behaviour in our (older) children that we don't like, it is always worth doing an honest “self-check” to see if it is something that we have unintentionally role-modelled. (Likewise, take some encouragement when you see good things!)
- ♦ We are each “role-modelling”. Whether in leadership, position of influence etc, or not - our example of how we live that role will speak to others – and especially the younger ones amongst us. Thus there is an obligation on each of us to be honest about our lives- or we end up misleading others, especially the younger amongst us, into thinking that our “public face” is how we really live when in fact it only masks our secret (often ungodly) living.
- ♦ As parents, make a conscious effort to have your children exposed to a range of godly role-models so that they can see the variety of ways people express their attempts to live Christ-like lives in various contexts. (Beware of putting too much focus on any one person [other than Christ] because no-one person is perfect and

every individual has unique gifting and personality that cannot be 100% copied. This can lead to a sense of failure on the part of the “follower” when they cannot live up to their role model - or the role-model may fall into temptation leading to a sense of disillusionment for the “follower”)

- ♦ There is also a place for pointing out examples to our children of “what not to do”. Explain the likely consequences of such ungodly or foolish behaviour and (sadly) when these consequences appear, take the opportunity in a sensitive and non-judgemental way of showing your children that these consequences are real.

Our example?? Do we realise that we are each role models, both to our children and wider family, and also to everyone around us.