

# Why Cornerstone is a Family Integrated Church



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And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

( Joshua 8:34-35, ESV )

### What is a Family Integrated Church?

Before we answer the question of why Cornerstone is a Family Integrated Church, we need to define what that is.

A **family integrated church** is one in which parents and children attend church services together, children stay all through church services without attending Sunday school or children's ministries, and organized groups and activities for children and youth are non-existent. It is also a church where the fathers especially, but also mothers (especially single moms ) are held primarily responsible for the spiritual education and training of their children.

### Why?

**Because the Bible says so!**

The first reason we are an FIC (family integrated church ) is because the Bible tells us this is how church is to be done!

Family integrated churches believe in what is called the *sufficiency of Scripture*. In other words, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:3, the Bible can be trusted to instruct us on all matters pertaining to faith and godliness and church life. We are not left without instructions about how church ought to be done or how a family ought to be structured for successful generational faith transmission. To be frank, we don't have a better system than the one God gave us in His word to instruct our children in the ways and love of God.

The Bible is very clear, God intended worship and instruction to be age integrated. Listen to these instructions from God's word:

Joshua 8:34-35:

*There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones,*  
Deuteronomy 29:10-12

*"You are standing today all of you before the Lord your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, **your little ones**, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, . . .so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is making with you today,*

Deuteronomy 31:12-13

*Assemble the people, men, women, **and little ones**, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God,*

2 Chronicles 20:13,

*Meanwhile all Judah stood before the Lord, **with their little ones**, their wives, **and their children**.*

Joel 2:15-16

*Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the **children**, even **nursing infants**.*

### New Testament Examples

The examples in the New Testament are no different. Jesus showed us how to minister to children and youth and there is no evidence to suggest he segregated children and youth or held special meetings just for them. See Luke 18:15-17.

When Jesus preached the sermon on the Mount, we find in Matthew 14:14-21 that entire families listened in to his sermon together. . .

*And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and **children**.*

If we are to imitate Paul, as Paul imitated Jesus, then our worship and instruction needs to be age integrated, i.e. no junior church for our kids!

Even more compelling perhaps are the letters written to New Testament churches. Both in Ephesians and

Colossians Paul addresses everyone who is present in the worship service of the church.

In Ephesians 6:1-4, Paul says, ***Children**, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* See also Colossians 3:18-22.

Here is what commentator and Bible scholar William Hendriksen says of these passages:

*"The apostle assumes that among those who will be listening when this letter is read to the various congregations the children will not be lacking. . . Were Paul to be present with us today he would be shocked at the spectacle of children attending the Sunday school and then going home just before the regular worship service. He has a word addressed directly and specifically to the children.* (William Hendriksen, "Exposition of Ephesians" page 258, quoted in Scott Brown's book "A Weed in the Church" ).

### During Times of Prayer

Acts 21:5-6

*When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives **and children**, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another.*

### How the Body Functions

According to Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, the church body is designed to function with every member present including youth and children.

### Multi-Generational Worship

According to Paul's instruction to Titus (see chapter's 1 & 2) older men are to instruct younger men, and older women are to instruct younger women. There was no concept in the apostle's mind of an age segregated church where only young singles, or young families attended. The New Testament church was designed by God to be multi-generational so that the maturity attained by godly older saints could be passed down to younger generations and their progeny.

### If Pragmatism Ruled

Family integrated churches reject pragmatism as a means of choosing what is best for their churches, but if they did, they would soon discover that the age segregated model has failed. Based on survey results discovered by Britt Beemer and quoted in Ken Ham's book "Already Gone", evangelical churches are losing upwards of 80% of their children from the Christian Faith by the time they reach college. Broken down, that survey showed about 45% chose to leave mentally in junior high, another 45% chose to leave mentally in senior high and the final 10% chose to leave both mentally and physically by the time they reached college.

The reason for the dropout is because the church has failed to make the Bible credible, especially the belief that God created the world in six days according to the account in Genesis 1. When students are taught in public schools that the world and mankind came to be through the process of evolution, and that theory is taught with convincing pseudo-science facts, with no credible rebuttal from pastors or Sunday school teachers, naturally the children choose to reject what seems to them to be fiction in favor of naturalism.

Family integrated churches have learned that our children must be given objective credible evidence for creation and the arguments for a young earth required by Genesis 1 in order to have a lasting faith in the God of the Bible.

But far more important, these children must see those arguments believed in by their parents and reinforced by other adults who believe the same. You have heard it said, "It takes a village to raise a child" but in a family integrated church that concept is re-phrased to apply to the truth, "It takes a church to raise a child".

For further reading and study:

- ♦ Visit [www.ncfic.org](http://www.ncfic.org), the website of the National Center for Family Integrated Churches. Cornerstone is a member church of the NCFIC.
- ♦ Visit the store at the NCFIC web site. There you will find the movie "Divided" as well as Scott Brown's book "A Weed in the Church" which provides the biblical documentation for Family Integrated Churches.



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