

CHAPTER 11

Family, marriage & parenting – an under-utilised gateway



Family needs have never been greater in our nation – while God’s Word is full of wisdom for marriages and parenting. This is also a gateway for the gospel. What if our churches became more intentional in this area?

The point is simple. There are people within churches right across New Zealand who have wisdom regarding marriage and parenting, and for whom this topic is a primary passion. What if we were to release more of these people to serve in this specific area, bringing training and support to marriage and parenting – *with both our church members and our wider communities in view?*

Consider:

- **Marriage:** Half of all adults are married in NZ – who might be interested in a marriage course.
- **Pre-marriage:** Over 18,000 couples get married each year – who are potentially interested in pre-marriage courses. This is statistically proven to help marriages last!
- **Parenting:** 58,000 children were born last year. That’s 58,000 sets of parents

who might be interested in parenting courses related to babies, then toddlers, then children and eventually teenagers.

- **Divorce recovery:** About 7,500 couples divorced last year. That’s 15,000 adults suffering pain who might benefit from a divorce recovery course.
- **Grief recovery:** About 38,500 people died last year. That’s a lot of people who could benefit from a course on processing grief!

We live in an age of broken families, struggling parents – and unavoidable pain. This is an underutilised connection point in our Christian witness and service!

To consider:

1. What could local churches do to minister in the above areas?
2. How could churches collaborate together, to potentially offer a wider range of options to their communities each year together – which they then promote widely?

This area is a gateway for connections and reputation, while genuinely helping in a genuinely important area – and there

are likely people in nearly every church for whom this will be a primary passion!

Resources:

Research courses available via the following ministries:

FAMILYLIFE^{NZ}
www.familylife.nz (Tandem Ministries)



www.alpha.org.nz



www.focusonthefamily.com



www.parentingplace.nz



churchinitiative.org