



Role Play

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Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Ephesians 5:21-23; 6:1-3

Have you ever heard of a symphony? It’s an elaborate work of music with a lot of musical instruments. There aren’t many symphonies that let a large, loud brass instrument called a trombone take the lead. That usually belongs to the violins, the flutes, or the trumpets. The trombones play the musical notes underneath. Now imagine this: you attend the symphony, and the entire time, the trombones play as loud as they can. Oh boy, you better cover your ears! That wouldn’t be beautiful music. For a symphony to sound delightful, each instrument needs to know its role.

“Know your role” might be a theme for today’s devotion. In Ephesians chapter 6, the apostle Paul addresses life as a family. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ,” he begins. Families seek to live in service to each other. As each member of the family—mom, dad, kids—carries out their roles, they do so humbly and with the well-being of everyone else in mind.

From there, Paul speaks to each member of the family. Wives are to submit to their husbands. Many hear those words and cringe because they think this is a put-down, like a master/slave relationship. It isn’t. Think instead of the head/helper image God uses. Think of our relationship to Christ. Why wouldn’t we want to submit to Christ when, as our head, he gave himself up for us? So, when a husband lives with self-sacrificing love like Christ, it shouldn’t be difficult for a helper to submit to a head like that, right? What a beautiful role!

Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. In love, Jesus took the lead and was responsible for the sins of the world on the cross. He sacrificed himself in our place. Using Jesus as their role model, husbands are asked to do the same and mirror Jesus’ love. They are to be responsible leaders for their families. Whether that means moments of pride or bearing sorrow, husbands sacrifice themselves and their self-interests for the good of the family. God lays the spiritual nurture of the family at the feet of husbands.

Even children fall underneath Paul’s probing eye. Family is the training ground for later adulthood, and as long as children are the learners, God calls for their obedience to their parents.

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Each member of the family has a role to play as it goes and grows. Since God forms families, it is good to listen to what he says about our roles. His advice is simple, “know your role.”

Questions to Consider:

Who are the people in your family?

Which role do you play in your family: mom, dad, or kid? What is your role?

In what way are wives to be like the Church?

How are husbands to be like Christ?

Read carefully, who all is asked to “submit,” why, and to whom?

How is Christ both a motivation and an example for husbands to fulfill their role in the family?