

## Parenting: A Partnership with God

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It has been said that the family is the only institution created by God. Ideally, we are meant to learn how to relate to and love each other from the relationships within our family. Love is a gift we give our spouses, children, parents, grandparents and ourselves. Yet, when we look at the world around us, families are facing an overload of challenges -- media that makes communicating around the world instantly, wars, terrorism, divorce rates, single parents, homelessness--all impact the nuclear family and how our children view life. It is obvious that many families need help and support in practicing love.

It is important for us as parents to remember that parenting isn't just learning the right techniques, a collection of wise words or the best bag of tricks. We raise responsible and happy children by finding Real Love for ourselves, so we can give our children what they need most. As our children's first teachers, our relationship with our children is key. Regardless of all technological advances, parents will always be the most important source of information and values for their growing children.

The most important role for families is to provide a place where children can feel unconditionally loved and learn how to love others. If our children don't feel loved, it doesn't matter what kind of clothes he wears, how well she does academically or what he does on the soccer or swim team.

In order to be happy, a child (actually all of us) must feel loved and learn to love others. Relationships in the family give a wonderful chance to learn how to be loving. Disagreements and quarrels among siblings provide the opportunity for us to guide them in working out differences with respect and love.

I believe that God created us to be an extension of Himself. He intended to dwell among us, to resonate with our minds and hearts and experience all the joys and challenges of physical life and the universe through us. In the relationships in our families, we can partner with God so that He can experience life within and among us.