

Hyun Jin Moon's Family Peace Association: Building a Family that Serves Together

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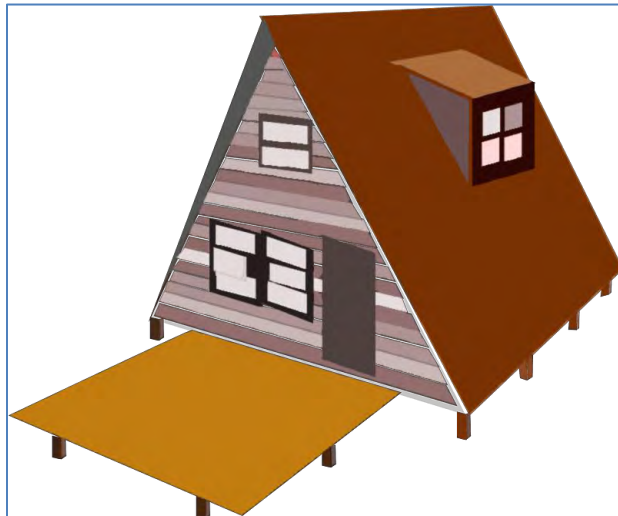
We can't help but feel that God designed the family to serve the world together. When a family serves together with God as their center, with each family member adding unique value, they become an unstoppable force of goodness.

We recently assisted with a kids clothing giveaway, where families came and dropped off clothing that their children had outgrown, and could pick out new clothing for their children from the ones other families had donated. Although Mom could have simply gone to the event by

herself, we made it a point to go and serve together as a family. Each of us played a different role: Mom sorted the clothes, Dad went out and bought refreshments for everyone, and our toddler son greeted all the families with his smile and cheer. Each member of the family, though varied in age, had something unique to offer.

This reminded us of the tradition we have consciously been building since the day we got married.

When we were newly married, we received advice from a mentor couple that became one of the guiding principles of our marriage: "Do public service together." Doing service together has been beneficial all around: for the people on the receiving end of the service; for each of us as we live for something beyond ourselves and strengthen our character and faith; and it deepens our relationship. We're very grateful for this "secret ingredient" we were given early on in marriage, and we're happy that as we now raise our son, it has become part of our family culture. We'd like to share some of the experiences that we have been so grateful for.



One particularly memorable experience was a few years ago when we were asked to help out at a week-long youth workshop where high school students were learning about God and cultivating their spiritual lives. The participants were spending the nights on-site. Mom was the advisor of the workshop and understood the importance of having a supervisor present at nighttime. At the same time, she couldn't stay away from our then-nine-month-old son for six nights.

During the process of figuring out a solution, we were asked by the staff if our whole family could stay each night at the workshop site. It was a situation we hadn't seen before. We had heard of "dorm parents," but not with a nine-month-old

baby in the mix. In many practical ways, it didn't make the most sense, but we understood that the

purpose was for the spiritual benefit of the participants and staff of the workshop, to have a family that could supervise and be mentors if needed. So we agreed to it.



We were surprised by the experience. Mom felt tremendous gratitude that she could be with our son and with the youth participants and staff of the workshop, watching all of them learning and growing. Although Dad was out working during the day, he provided an important presence at night as a father figure who brought a sense of stability and protection. Although we were worried that our baby would distract the participants, instead, he brought lots of joy to those present and helped the newer participants feel more comfortable with his warm smiles. He, too, greatly benefited from the love that he was surrounded by during his time with all his "uncle" and "aunt" figures.

The workshop staff expressed how much the culture was impacted by having not just an adult supervisor on-site, but a whole family present. They said it helped to create a stable and safe environment where the participants and staff could focus on the workshop. Some of the staff members, who were college students, shared with us later that they were thinking about marriage and family in their future, and were inspired to see an example of a couple and family serving together.



Serving the greater good as a family isn't always the easiest or most convenient path. At times, we've struggled to decide whether or not to give up some major personal family plans. But whenever we chose to follow God's call, we never regretted it because we saw and experienced His incredible love at work right in front of us. And those moments have had a lasting impact on our family relationships and culture. When we, as a family, live for the sake of the greater community and world, our family also grows closer together and reaches new levels of unity. It's a total win-win. As we reflect on these experiences and those of other families who have taught us this way of life through their example, we can't help but feel that this is part of God's amazing design for the family.