

Family Panel Discussion

Today will be a bit different. Rather than hearing a typical sermon from one of our pastors, we'll hear from three families in our church in a panel discussion format. We pray that you'll be challenged and encouraged. Here is a bit of information about our panelists:

Donna Bernard:

As the oldest girl in a family of eight children, Donna understood the importance of investing in children from a young age. She believes that God gave her the love of children when she began investing in her younger siblings. As an adult, she opened her home (weekends, holidays, and any other occasion she could get them) and her heart to her many nieces and nephews (she has 18). Five years ago, God blessed her with two children of her own through adoption, and she currently invests in two wonderful boys: Barnes (5) and Legend (8). Donna worked as a journalist for five years (The Ruston Daily Leader), a marketer for 20 years (Argent Financial, HealthSouth, and The University of Louisiana at Monroe), and is now the Child Advocate at The Domestic Abuse Resistance Team.

Byron and Melinda Moore:

Byron and Melinda Moore have been married for 33 years. They've raised four children, all of whom are now adults. Byron has worked at Argent for 22 years, and Melinda (a registered dietician) serves at Life Choices where she teaches a class called Cooking for Life. She also regularly reads to children at Glenview Elementary. Byron and Melinda have a passion for working with young adults through the areas of walking with God, marriage, and parenting. They enjoy traveling together and stalking their children when they live far away.

Drew and Ellie Blackburn:

Drew and Ellie have been married for 15 years. Their six children range in age from 3 to 14, so they are dealing with issues at every age. Drew and Ellie feel very much "in the thick of it," teaching driving and potty training at the same time. The Blackburns have invested together in small groups and personal discipleship – Ellie largely to young mothers and Drew to young professionals. They enjoy the outdoors, hiking and camping as a family. Drew also serves as an elder at The Bridge.

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QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

1. Have someone read Luke 8:20-21, James 1:27, and Psalm 68:5-6. In our series, we've seen that one function of the church is to serve as a family to those who have no family. How has this been true, or untrue, for you?
2. What are some patterns or habits that seem to be helping your family/those closest to you grow in their love for God?
3. What are the biggest challenges or obstacles keeping you from having a love for God as the central priority of your family/closest relationships?
4. Is there another family that could help you navigate your current season? Or a family that could use your help? Would you consider reaching out to them?

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