

**Omega Course:
Practical Church Planter Training**

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ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

WHAT WE DO:

Church Planter Training and Mentoring

The Alliance provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

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Biblical Roles in the Family

☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of the lesson is to present a clear biblical and foundational teaching for marriage and the role of the husband, wife and children in a family.

☛ Main Points

- In marriage, God is able to complement the strengths and weaknesses of the husband and wife to make them complete, which enables them to best serve Him.
- The ministry of a church planter includes his family, since the family is a visible and biblical indicator of leadership ability and discipling effectiveness.

☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the purpose of marriage from the perspective of the One who ordained it.
- Have a better understanding of the biblical teaching about the roles of the husband and the wife in the marriage relationship.
- Understand family relationships as an analogy of the Church.

INTRODUCTION

The Church has become the centerpiece of God's kingdom on earth. Within this community of believers, God has called all of His children into loving relationships with Himself and with each other. Some have been called to serve the Lord and the Church in a state of singleness and others in a state of marriage. But whether married or single, everyone has been placed in a family.

The family is one analogy used to describe the Church. Your understanding of the relationships in physical families will influence the way you look at the family of God. It is important, therefore, that you as a church planter understand biblical roles within the family for your own life and ministry. Moreover, Paul, writing to his young leader Timothy, reminds Timothy of the responsibility of a leader within the church. Paul asks, "If a man does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1Ti 3:5). This thought-provoking question challenges all church leaders, especially the church planter, to evaluate his own ministry within his family. How is his management of his family if his family is a proving ground for his leadership ability in the church?

As you are busy with responsibilities for doing evangelism, discipling, and training leaders, seeking that the new church plant grows well, you must also remember that your own family remains the clearest indicator of leadership ability and discipling effectiveness. If the church planter develops habits that fail his ministry to his family, these may carry over to the new church as well. A church planter must give attention to his family relationships as part of his overall work of ministry.

I. The Married Couple

The basic unit of the family is the married couple. Reading the story of creation in Genesis, we see that when God created man in His image He created him male and female. These two people living

together as one (Ge 2:24) were a reflection of the image of the triune God who lives in perfect unity in diversity. As one, they were to live in a loving relationship that would result in reproducing children. They were given a task to perform: to rule over the fish, birds and animals of the earth. When they sinned, disharmony entered the loving relationship, reproduction was with pain, and instead of ruling over the earth they tried to rule over each other.

Part of the redemptive work of Christ is the restoration of the image of God within the marriage relationship. There are three principals that will serve as a foundation for the discussion of the roles within marriage.

A. Three Guiding Principles

1. Husbands and wives have equal worth.

From Galatians 3:28 we realize that God has designed *husbands and wives with equal worth*. A person's value is not based on function, or role, but rather on the fact that he or she is created in the image of God.

2. The husband and wife are to be interdependent.

In 1 Corinthians 11:11, we see that God has designed *the husband and wife to be interdependent*. The church is made up of men and women of all kinds of personalities. One of the distinguishing factors of the church is that its members coexist in unity. There are different depths in these relationships, but the marital relationship may be one of the most complex. In a Spirit-filled marriage, interdependency will be beautifully modeled. And of course this witnesses to the interdependency that exists in the Godhead.

3. There is an order of responsibility in the family.

From 1 Corinthians 11:3, we understand that God has designed *an order of responsibility in the family*. Just as there is a functional order in the Godhead, there is as well a functional order in marriage. God is the head of Christ, who is the head of every man, who is the head of his wife.

II. The Role Of The Husband

A. To Be the Head of the Wife: Ephesians 5:23

Paul states that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. This leadership involves responsibility and accountability before God for the family. Since the emphasis of the passage is on the husband's love for his wife, this is the most important part of his responsibility.

Husbands are to seek the best for their wives, even at their own expense. Headship defined this way becomes a high and holy calling. As church planters, the future of your marriage and/or of those who will be a part of your ministry depend on absolute clarity about this role. Headship is a calling to empower another human being; it's not a license to indulge one's self. One very practical outworking of this concept is in the area of spiritual gifts. The husband should be actively involved in assisting his wife discover her spiritual gifts. This will be an ongoing adventure as a wife's gifts are discovered, developed and released into ministry.

However, some people argue that according to Genesis 3, man is supposed to rule over his wife. The actual text of Genesis 3:16 does state: "...your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." The Hebrew word translated "rule" means to dominate, to keep beneath, to rule over as an absolute sovereign. The word is used of kings and public officials throughout the Old Testament. But keep in mind that Genesis 3:16 is a statement of the curse, not of the kingdom. It foretells how fallen men will dominate women and subjugate them to positions of lower status. This has been the case in thousands of cultures over thousands of years.

Harsh dominance is not the way of Christ. So when Paul says that a man is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church, he's not supporting the curse-- he's breaking it! He's showing how men can break the cycle of misery and the "me-first" mentality that the fall inaugurated.

So what was the leadership style of Christ?

This style is outlined in Luke 22:25-27 and is described as servant-leadership. "Servant" and "leader" are not terms that combine naturally. They seem to be in opposition. Yet, in God's kingdom, to be the "head" is to be this unique blend of leader and servant. It's true that men have been given authority to lead their wives, but the style is to be that of a servant, not as a lord. The aim, then, is to be a source of life to them. The husband's leadership of his wife is to be modeled after Christ's leadership of His bride, the Church. Christ doesn't exploit the Church. He doesn't dominate her, or force His leadership on her. On the contrary, He earned the right of leadership by expending Himself for His bride, and ultimately by dying for her. According to the model of Christ, leadership of the husband over his wife is characterized by:

- Responsibility, not rank.
- Sacrifice, not selfishness
- Duty, not domination

B. To Care for the Core Needs of the Wife

Consider Peter's admonition in 1 Peter 3:7, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life."

Wives need their husbands to live with them in an understanding way. This means that husbands need to relate to their wives knowledgeably, aware of the fact that they are different from men. Besides the obvious physical differences, there are vast psychological and emotional differences. Husbands should then give attention to the following three core concerns.

1. Companionship

The first is that wives need companionship. God designs women for deep, ongoing relationships and they expect their husbands to meet that need. They want and need the companionship, availability and interest of their husbands.

2. Security

The second need is security. A woman needs the security of a man. She needs to know he can protect and provide for her. She needs to be able to trust him. Biblically, these things are the responsibility of the husband (1Ti 5:8).

3. Significance

The third need is for significance, which is a need shared by both husband and wife. The husband often receives significance from his job, his role in the church, or other activities outside the home. But so much of what the wife does is hidden from view. The one person who can really appreciate her unique contributions, the one who can honor her accordingly, is her husband. She is a friend, a nurturer, and a soul mate. Part of the leadership role is to make her feel honored and not taken for granted.

C. To Carry Out the Duties of a Father

The main responsibility of a father is to bring up his children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4). This includes teaching them the ways of the Lord (De 6:7), and disciplining them as necessary (Pr 19:18, 22:6, 23:13,14, 29:17).

III. The Role Of The Wife

Proverbs 31:10 asks the compelling question, "An excellent wife, who can find?" For a woman to be an 'excellent' wife is for her to understand God's design for a wife and, by His grace, to be conformed by Him to that design.

A. A Helpmate

God created the woman to be a helpmate to man (Ge 2:18). She is the emotional and physical complement that makes a man more suited to His purposes and service before God. She does not make him whole in the spiritual, emotional or physical sense. However, she does make him more complete than he was by himself without her. She brings to him perspective, emotions, gifts, and weaknesses he himself does not possess. Together, sealed and gifted by the Holy Spirit, the husband and wife are complete and are best able to serve the Lord.

B. Supportive

As she is complementary to her husband, the wife is also a support to him. Support of him is part of her "chaste and respectful behavior" (1Pe 3:2) toward him. She knows his strengths and weaknesses, and she builds him up for his work. Proverbs 14:1 shows that a woman can build up or tear down her house. She can build up the emotional strength and resolve of her husband, or she can help to destroy him, shaming him and being as "rotteness in his bones" (Pr 12:4b).

C. Submissive

The wife also has the responsibility to be submissive to her husband. There is no more often repeated command for the wife than for her to be submissive to her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18, 1Pe 3:1), a characteristic of godly women such as Abraham's wife, Sarah (1Pe 3:6). And yet, her position of submission is a very powerful one. By faith she submits to her husband and appeals to her heavenly Father. Like the king's heart (Pr 21:1), the husband's heart is in the hand of God. As she submits to her husband, she submits to God and allows His hand to move in the life of her husband. By her acts of submission, she allows God to win her husband to greater obedience to Himself (1Pe 3:1). She is not commanded to rebel to sway her husband's opinion. She is commanded to submit by faith in order to release God's hand to work in her husband's life and her own.

D. A Manager

Scripture gives the model of an industrious wife who labors for her husband's and her household's profit (Pr 31:10 to 31, especially verse 11). Unlike the wives of Samaria who, in Amos' time, oppressed the poor and needy and made insatiable demands upon their husbands (Am 4:1), the woman of Proverbs 31 fears the Lord (v. 30), serves her husband (v. 12), builds up her house (v. 27), causing her husband's reputation to increase (v. 23) and for him to trust in her (v.11). Her secret is that she is an able support for her husband, caring for and managing his household, making it a harmonious and profitable place that produces much good for him. She serves him, holding him in esteem, though managing his home more ably than he could. The husband can only glorify God for His goodness in giving her to him (Pr 19:14).

E. A Mother: Titus 2:4

The core role of a woman doesn't stop with loving her husband. Titus 2:4 goes on to encourage her to be a "child-lover." Children, especially young ones, need tremendous doses of personal attention, support, and of course love. Children need the awesome power of their mother's presence. According to many childcare experts, healthy, normal child development requires a close, loving, and sustained relationship with at least one person during a minimum of the first two years of life. Titus indicates that the mother should provide that care, but the dominant cultures of our day are, for the most part, abandoning these Scriptural principles and instead are *seeking their own self-interests*.

IV. The Role Of Children

A. To Obey Their Parents in the Lord

Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." This instruction from Paul to the church in Ephesus raises several questions that the church planter should address:

- Is he referring to minors only?
- Should adults continue to obey their parents, even if no longer living in their parents' home?
- If an adult remains in his or her father's house, does this apply?
- Does the "in the Lord" mean that if a parent is not a Christian, the child does not need to obey him or her?

B. To Honor Their Father and Mother

Paul's instruction quotes from the Old Testament and reminds the Ephesians that this is the first commandment with a promise: "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (Eph 6:2-3, De 5:16).

CONCLUSION

This lesson is of value to you either as a single or married church planter. As you understand the biblical roles with the family, your own life will be strengthened, your entire congregation will be helped and the community in which you live will see the oneness and love of God modeled through you personally and through the teaching and counseling opportunities that God will give.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- If you are a single person, how can this lesson be of benefit to you in your ministry?
- If you are married, can you say that your marriage mirrors God's image by demonstrating oneness?
- Are you experiencing companionship in your marriage? What does this look like?
- What factors in society and within marriage make it difficult today to be an effective spouse? What is the greatest struggle in being a good spouse?
- What factors in society and in the Church make it difficult to live as a single person today? What is the greatest struggle in being a single person?

ACTION PLAN

- Read 1 Peter 3:8-12. The attitude of selfishness destroys unity. Taking this into consideration, read once again the passage above and then list things you should do when your mate is selfish.
- A husband's servant-leadership is the only thing that makes a wife's submission reasonable. A passive husband makes submission impossible and a domineering husband makes submission intolerable. Servant-leadership, on the other hand, makes submission a joy. In light of these thoughts, answer the following questions:
 - How would your becoming a servant-leader affect the ability of your wife to be submissive?
 - How would she respond in other areas if you were more of a servant-leader?
 - Does the Bible teach anything about to whose leadership single women are to submit? What guidelines can you find?
- In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul addressed the issue of oneness among Christians. Read Philippians 2:1-4 and then think about how verse 2 explains how to achieve oneness in a relationship. How can you apply these principles in your family life, whether in a marriage or in other family relationships?
- As church planters you will have many opportunities to provide biblical counsel to unbelievers and believers who have suffered from failed marriages or who are presently experiencing disunity within their marriage. As well, you will have opportunity to provide counsel to men and women who are

contemplating marriage. Start a small group discussion with some unmarried men and women of your age that are contemplating marriage in the future. Guide them in discovering the biblical patterns discussed in this lesson and the practical outworking of these patterns.

SOURCES

Lewis, Robert and Hendricks, William. *Rocking the Roles*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991.

☞ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to help church planters understand and apply biblical principles for parenting.

☞ Main Points

- Parenting requires walking by faith.
- God's Word gives us some principles that should be applied to parenting.

☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should:

- Know what the Bible teaches about parenting.
- Be able to evaluate his or her own parenting by biblical standards.
- Develop ways to improve his or her parenting

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Use this material to give the trainees the basic biblical principles. Resist the urge to "tell them how to do it." Leave time for discussing the questions at the end, either in small groups or all together.

INTRODUCTION

Christian bookstores are full of books with instructions for Christian parents. These books contain many specific models, each claiming to be THE biblical way. But although the Bible does give us certain directives, what it does not give is step-by-step instructions for raising children. In this lesson we will look at some biblical principles that can be applied to parenting situations. Because each child is a unique person with unique needs, how parents apply the principles is a matter of prayerfully seeking wisdom from the Lord. Like the rest of the Christian life, parenting is a walk of faith.

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed His followers to make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey all things He had said. The role of a parent is like that of the church planter: to make disciples and to teach them obedience to God. For church planters who are parents, the parenting role has great significance: it is significant for the family members themselves, it is significant for their testimony to the world, and it is significant for the church. The way parents relate to their children is reflected in the way they relate to the church (1Ti 3:4,5). For church planters who are not parents, this lesson is still important because the same principles apply to helping spiritual children within their ministry.

I. Some Initial Observations

A. No Guarantees

Contrary to what is often thought, the Bible does not make any guarantees that if parents do everything right, children will love the Lord and serve Him. A verse that is often cited as a promise from God is Proverbs 22:6, "Train a child in the way he

should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." If their children grow up and reject the Lord, they feel that the Lord has betrayed them.

Please notice that this verse is stating a principle of cause and effect: if you do "X" then "Y" will result. The book of Proverbs, which was written to help guide youth to righteous living, has many similar statements. Training children when they are young will start them down the path to righteousness. Rather than a promise that is true in all cases, this verse states a general principle that if parents train their children to obey the Lord when they are young, when they are old they will continue on His path. The fact that sometimes children do depart from the Lord in no way diminishes the principle or the parents' responsibility to train their children in the Lord's ways. Most children who receive such early training do continue in it.

B. No Perfect Children

Why then do some children who have started out walking in the path of righteousness "turn from it"? Every person is a sinner who has choices to make. Proverbs 1: 29 speaks of those who "...hated knowledge and did not fear the Lord." Ultimately, every person must choose for himself whether or not he will follow the Lord. Even children with good training may make the wrong choice.

C. No Perfect Parents

God is the only perfect parent; earthly parents are not perfect. No matter how much they love the Lord and their children, they will sometimes fail (1Jn 1: 8-10). No one has all the answers. Parents need to be constantly and prayerfully seeking the Lord's wisdom for training children in the way they should go.

II. Some Biblical Principles

Although there are no guarantees because of the sinful nature of both children and parents, God has given us certain principles to guide us in the training of children.

A. Model Love and Obedience for the Lord (Dt 6:4-9, 17)

In the Old Testament, God commanded Israel to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength... Impress (His commandments) on your children... Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord." They were to do this at home, walking along the road, when they lay down and when they got up. Loving God and keeping His commandments was to be a lifestyle that the parents should develop and pass on to their children.

B. Direct Your Children to Keep the Way of the Lord (Ge 18: 19)

When speaking about the parents' responsibility to direct their children, the Bible often equates this with discipline. Verses like Proverbs 3:11,12 and Hebrews 12:5-11 remind us that discipline is necessary. But the reason for it is because the father (both Heavenly and earthly) loves the child. Whenever discipline is administered, it should be done with a love that has the best interest of the child in mind. The child must be able to discern that love in the midst of the discipline. The desired result is that the child learns to keep the ways of the Lord.

C. Do Not Exasperate Your Children (Eph 6:4)

Many parents are so intent on the second part of Ephesians 6:4, bringing up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord, that they forget the first part, do not exasperate your children. Stories of Christian workers whose children have become bitter and turned from the Lord are numerous. These children often tell stories of parents who were overly strict, unfair, demanding, authoritarian: parents who exasperated their children in their zeal to train them to love the Lord. Unfortunately, often family devotions are seen as times the parents can preach at

the children. The result is children who are bitter and resentful toward their parents and toward God.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are some practical ways you can make love for and obedience to the Lord a lifestyle in your home?
- What are some practical ways you can check to see if your discipline is done out of love? What do you consider the biggest hindrance to that kind of discipline?
- What are some practical things you can do to make your family devotions a time the children will enjoy?

ACTION PLAN

List some characteristics you desire your children to have spiritually, socially, mentally and physically when they are 18 years old. Then write the name of each child on a separate sheet of paper. List what you are doing or need to do to help that child attain each of these characteristics.

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Ministry to the Family

A WORKSHOP

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity for an open and honest discussion of issues that may have an impact for the church planter and the balance between ministry and family.

☞ Main Points

- There must be a balance between the time spent in ministry to the family and ministry to the church.
- In the life and ministry of a church planter, problems will arise which relate directly to the spouse and children. These problems must be recognized, openly discussed, and a commitment must be made on the part of the church planter to prayerfully resolve them.

☞ Desired Outcomes

As a result of this workshop, each participant should:

- Understand that as a church planter, balance and unity in a marital relationship as well as in the home are foundational concepts to a healthy ministry.
- Practice a commitment to understanding one's family members and how their lives are impacted and have an impact on the ministry of the church planter. Strive to obtain balance and unity in family and marriage.

☞ Suggestions To Trainers

The examples presented here are used merely to stimulate discussion about the need to seek balance between a church planter's ministry, and marriage and family. Please feel free to utilize your own examples and discussion questions but make sure that your discussions touch on issues such as servant leadership, conflict resolution, proper decision-making in the home, appropriate ways to express love to one's spouse, accepting one's own and one's spouse's weaknesses and strengths, etc. Carefully prepare for this session by reading all of the scenarios and then develop your lesson time according to issues that are of concern to your trainees. The scenarios and questions provided may or may not be adequate to meet the needs of your particular context. In this case, feel free to develop your own examples and questions.

INTRODUCTION

Often the question is asked, "Which comes first, family or the ministry?" The answer is neither. GOD comes first. Because we love Him, we serve Him. He has given us certain tasks to perform, all of which are part of our ministry to Him. To try and separate family and ministry is like trying to separate our spiritual life from our ministry. It is impossible, because they are interwoven. Our family is a part of our ministry.

The key to effective ministry in a church plant and in a family is balance. Some church planters and pastors take their commitment to ministry in the church to an extreme, and they effectively ignore their family. This is in direct contrast to the commands in the Bible for a father to instruct and discipline his children (De 6:7, Pr 22:6). How can a father do these things if he never sees his children or spends time with them? Consider Eli the priest, whose two sons were so wicked that God put them to death (1 Sa 2:34). God has given us the responsibility to raise our children because He knows that on their own, they will not make right choices.

Some church planters take the other extreme -- they are overly preoccupied with their family, to the extent that they are not fulfilling the calling that God has given them as pastors and/or church planters. It can be very easy for the family to become something that takes away our devotion from God. Jesus warned in Matthew 10:37 that anyone who loves his family more than Christ is not worthy of Him.

The qualifications for both overseers and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 require a more balanced view -- a leader in the church is to be a man of one wife, who manages his children and household well. Just as individuals who fail morally disqualify themselves from ministry, so individuals who fail in their family lives also disqualify themselves from ministry. Every church planter who is married must strive to maintain a proper balance between the time that he spends with his wife and children, and the time that he spends with the church. Both are ministries, and both are his calling.

Guidelines To This Workshop

The following scenarios discuss situations and problems that are common among church planters. As you work through them, look for similarities in your own life and ministry.

- Break into small groups at the beginning of the lesson time. Each group should deal with just one of the scenarios.
- Come up with biblical principles that could have been applied to the situation.
- At the end of the small group time, have everyone gather as a larger group and have each group present its findings.

Note to Translator: Please change names in the following case studies to those common in your language.

I. Scenario ONE - Igor And Luba

Rocked by the swaying of the train, Igor settled down for a welcome night's sleep. While it had been a busy five days during the training seminar, he was very encouraged by what he had learned and by the fellowship of others who had the same desire as his own: to start new churches. There had been such unity during the seminar. Everyone understood his struggles and concerns as they were all in the initial stage of establishing churches. Their times of prayer had been worshipful and empowering.

As Igor drifted off to sleep, contemplating the continuation of his church planting ministry, he felt a beautiful peace and a renewed sense of the powerful presence of God in his life. He couldn't wait to share his new ideas with his church planting team and start implementing them in his ministry.

Luba, at about the same time that Igor was drifting off to sleep, was in the middle of another of many family catastrophes since Igor's departure. As she rocked her and Igor's youngest baby (an 8 month old girl) she felt frantic. The flu had hit all three of her children in the last two days and now the baby Katya had a high fever and had been vomiting. Luba was exhausted. The continual needs of her children and the non-stop cleanup of messes related to the flu had brought her to the limit of her physical strength.

But flu was only the last of several problems since Igor left. Besides the extra work that his absence brought about, their refrigerator had broken down and a leak in the roof had damaged some of the living room wall paper during a recent rainstorm.

Having lived in this new town for just a few months, she had no one to turn to for help or even to talk to. She was looking forward to Igor's return. His help would be welcome, but even more than that she wanted to talk with someone about the burdens of her heart and soul related to the living in this remote area away from her family and friends and an easier lifestyle.

When Igor and Luba greeted one another at the front door they were very glad to see one another. He couldn't wait to talk about the previous week's events but there were more immediate problems that needed Igor's attention.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are some immediate things that Igor could do to make the situation better?
2. How should Igor respond to the situation he finds at home?
3. Please state what you think Igor will want to talk about when he and Luba sit down for their talk.
4. What kind of burdens could Luba be carrying that she wanted to share with someone?
5. Igor's ministry requires him to be away from home frequently- sometimes for as much as a full week. How can he prevent another stressful occurrence like this?
6. How can he encourage her and help her to see herself as his partner in ministry?
7. How can a church planter with a family determine how much time he needs to reserve/set aside for caring for his family's needs?

II. Scenario Two - Andrea And Tibor

Andrea was rejoicing about the young father whom her husband, Tibor, had just led to the Lord. She was so happy for Tibor because he was being used greatly by the Lord. In the last six months the new church had grown from a couple of families to 15. They were encouraged in this ministry but Andrea still had these haunting concerns and feelings. She had told Tibor about her need to talk but it seemed as if he was always so busy with his ministry that they never had time to talk. He came home almost every evening very late and dead tired. He said that it would be better if they talked when he was alert, but then he was up and out of the house early in the morning to go to some meeting or to talk to some new convert or to teach a class at one of the several cell groups which were meeting in their neighborhood. Besides her initial concerns, she was beginning to feel jealous. This church planting ministry was becoming a totally consuming love for Tibor that was taking her place in his life. She was feeling things that she didn't want to feel. She wanted to be supportive of Tibor and his ministry. That was her commitment to the Lord and to her husband. But she felt so isolated. This was a city that had no church before they came and until recently there were no believers. Now there were some women converts who were being discipled but they would never be able to understand her life as the pastor's wife. She wanted to feel like she was a contributing part of Tibor's ministry, but up to this point she hadn't been involved and she hadn't been asked to be involved. What could she do to get Tibor to slow down long enough to talk about these burdens on her heart?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. From the facts of the story does it seem that Tibor was communicating with Andrea about her needs as a wife and mother?
2. Do you think Tibor was involving Andrea in his church planting ministry? Was there partnership and unity in their lives?
3. In what ways is Tibor failing as a husband?
4. What practical advice can you suggest that would help Tibor to become better at communicating with his wife?
5. What do you have to say concerning "balance" in this marriage?
6. How is Tibor living out Ephesians 5:25-26?
7. How can Tibor involve Andrea effectively in his ministry?

III. Scenario Three - Nicu And His Family

Nicu had had a long week. He had made some major mistakes as a husband and a father. He had been humbled by his own sinful ways and now, after confession and repentance, life was taking on a positive look once again. But if anyone had asked him how he was doing these days, he would have had to admit that he was still angry. Here is the story:

One day his oldest son, Razvan, age 18 was watching a movie on their VCR in their home. He had borrowed it from one of his friends. Nicu walked into the room and sat down and joined Razvan. Soon after Lina, Nicu's wife, came into the room and joined them. After just a few minutes it became apparent to Lina that this movie was not appropriate for Christians to watch. She made her view known to Nicu and then left the room. Nicu followed her and explained that Razvan was old enough now to make decisions on his own about what he should watch and what he shouldn't watch. Lina argued that it was their responsibility as parents while any of their children lived in their home to determine what should be watched, read or talked about in their home. Nicu was angry with Lina for confronting him about this, especially in front of Razvan. It was embarrassing as the head of the house to be confronted by his wife. So in somewhat of a vengeful way he didn't agree with her point of view and allowed Razvan to finish the movie.

That night when they were ready to go to bed, Lina raised the issue again but Nicu refused to budge from his position. He was even angrier with Lina now and he refused to pray with her before going to sleep. The next morning after a very miserable night of sleep, Nicu got up to have his devotions. He couldn't concentrate on his Bible reading, he couldn't pray because he was so angry. At the breakfast table, he made the announcement to the entire family that no videos would be allowed to be shown in his home again and there were to be no exceptions. The other children had no idea what was going on but they could tell by their father's voice and the tears in their mother's eyes that there was something wrong between them. Nicu had felt terrible about the whole situation. He was a pastor. He was involved in starting a new church and telling people about the love of Christ and the joy of the Christian life. He had no love and joy in his life due to this problem. But there was more to it than that. He knew that his wife was right about his responsibility to set the spiritual tone in the home. He was just too proud to admit his failure. He also knew that he was disobeying Scripture because he was not loving his wife as Christ loves the Church. This anger he had been feeling was in fact anger at his own body because they were one flesh. He had to correct the situation. So at the next meal, when the entire family was together again, he apologized for several things he had done that were wrong. He did so in brokenness and tears and asked for forgiveness from his family. They prayed together and good healthy discussion followed about the place of videos in their home.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Razvan is 18 years old, a young man! Why does he feel free to show improper movies on his parent's TV?
2. As evidenced in Nicu's response to Lina, what essential Christian attribute is missing in his life?
3. Was family meal time an appropriate "meeting" time to discuss this, or any significant family problem?
4. Why should there have been a difference of opinion in the thinking of a Christian couple on clear cut matters relating to spiritual or moral aspects of life?
5. What can you say about the communication and understanding between Nicu and Lina up to this point?

6. Should Nicu have been embarrassed by Lina's confronting him?
7. How can such occurrences be prevented in the future?

IV. Scenario Four - Anicka And Mirek

"See you soon!" Anicka called as she shut the door behind the last visitor. It was past midnight, and she had just enough energy to gather up the teacups and put them in the sink before slumping onto her bed. Her husband Mirek was already preparing for bed.

The phone rang early the next morning. Anicka ran to get it so that it wouldn't interrupt Mirek's study time. It was a friend from a neighboring city who was passing through town. "Could I stay at your house tonight?" he asked. It would mean extra work for her, but how could she say no?

Their life had certainly changed in the six months since they'd started planting the church. Anicka couldn't remember another time that had been so busy. When they weren't out in the neighborhood, it seemed as though the neighborhood was in their apartment. People were arriving for Bible studies, counseling, or meetings nearly every hour of the day. Anicka didn't resent that: other people were realizing what she already knew-- that Mirek had a shepherd's heart. She tried to tell herself that she needed to be a supportive wife. But just because Mirek needed to be free to talk to people and help with their needs, did that mean that Anicka had to pick up all the rest of the duties?

Anicka thought back to the previous June, when they were sent out as church planters. Their pastor had encouraged them to work together and complement each other. The pastor knew that Anicka's gift of evangelism would be important in church planting. It proved to be true-- the first new believers in their church were people Anicka had met and witnessed to. But now, she admitted to herself, she had little time to go out and do what she loved most: talk to others about Christ. Something had to change, and quickly.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Does Mirek and Anicka's lifestyle suggest that there is balance in their lives? Explain your answer.
2. What are Anicka's unvoiced expectations? What about Mirek's?
3. How could Mirek help his wife use her gifts?
4. Is it possible for spouses to be equal "partners in ministry?" (see Ac 18:24-26).

V. Scenario Five - Renata And Her Family

Renata could tell by the look on her father's face that she had done something wrong. Did she forget a chore, or was this just his ongoing disapproval of her decision to follow Christ? She always tried to be careful to help around the house before going out to work with the church planting team. After all, her father made it clear that he felt a 26-year-old could better spend her time looking for a husband than leading a women's discipleship group.

Just that evening, the discipleship group had gone so well. Her co-worker Matthias had encouraged her to continue teaching women how to build the church and know Christ better. "I don't know what we would do without your help," he had said. "There's no way my wife could have led the group with two babies at home. We're so thankful that you're available."

Renata's mother entered the room and called her back to reality. "Renata," she started, "we need you to be home tomorrow night."

"Mom," Renata replied, "you know that's the night I meet with my team."

"Oh yes," her mother returned, sarcastically, "the important people in your life. How could I forget?"

Renata tried to control her temper and quickly stepped out of the room. She knew she was supposed to honor her parents, but the words she was tempted to say were far from respectful. Her feelings were a jumbled combination of anger and guilt. Why did she always react badly to her parents' comments? Why did they deliberately plan activities to keep her from what God had called her to?

More than anything, she wished she could afford to live on her own, but her work as a church planter meant she could only work part-time as a bookkeeper. Besides, it was still considered strange for a young, single woman to live outside of the shelter of her parents' household.

Sometimes Renata felt like she lived in two worlds: on the church planting team, she was praised and valued as a key player, and at home, she was criticized and treated like a slave. She knew which world she preferred, but she knew that, at least for now, she had to live in both of them.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Does the problem stem only from Renata's parents, or is she doing something to contribute to it? If so, what?
2. How can she honor her parents when they object to how she spends her time?
3. What would you suggest to Renata if she came to you seeking advice on her living situation?
4. What unique things must be considered when a single woman is helping to plant a church? How can other church planters be sensitive to those things?