

THE SMALL CHURCH OF THE HOME

When St. Paul sent greetings to the families of faithful Christian parents, he called them ‘**the Church of their household**’. St. John Chrysostom also referred to the Christian family as ‘**the Small Church**’.

This Christian understanding of the family as **the Small Church** has unfortunately fallen out of our understanding in 21st century America. Nevertheless, sociological research has reminded us of the importance of recovering this ancient Christian teaching. **Out of every 10 young adults who leave home, only 4 will continue to attend Church.** That means the majority, 60%, will fall away from the Church! When researchers looked into the difference between the 40% who remain active and the 60% who lapse, they found a distinct difference between these two populations.

- It was *NOT* simply weekly Church attendance – both groups had this, and weekly Church attendance was a *minimum* requirement
- It was *NOT* an active youth group – both groups had this
- The unique attribute of the 40% who remained active in their Church was **DAILY PRAYER AND DISCUSSION OF THE FAITH AT HOME WITH THEIR PARENTS**

This data simply wakes us up to the fact that, if we want our children to continue to practice the Christian Faith, and to make it their own, we must pray with them daily (this is in addition to dinner prayers), and discuss the Christian faith with them daily.

So just what does the family as the **Small Church** look like?

- Husband and Wife pray together with their children every day
- Father and Mother teach the Christian faith to their children
- Family members encourage one another to live according to the teachings of the Church
- Father and Mother give selflessly, for the sake of one another and of their children; the children respect and follow their parents’ example
- The family serves others in their community, because of their love for Christ



We are taught in the Scriptures that God has given parents to children to be their teachers—in fact, the Hebrew word for ‘parent’ comes directly from the word ‘teacher’. Even if we have not previously lived up to this expectation, the best time to start is **today**.

Holy Trinity will begin providing resources to help our families become the **Small Churches** they are called to be. We can begin now, simply by praying together with our children at the same time every day, reading the daily Scripture Readings (found on Holy Trinity’s website under ‘Saints, Feasts, and Readings’ for the current day) and praying the Lenten Meditation that is found in the *Koinonia*. **Giving our children a living Christian Faith that they make their own—which they in turn pass on to their children—requires hard work, but it is the *greatest gift* we could ever give them.**