

Faith at Home Questionnaire Summary

The following questionnaire was distributed by a number of organisations and individuals between September and November 2009. From this 273 responses have been collated. The following is a summary of the results. For us at Barnabas the main points and questions it has highlighted are the following:

- The significant number who feel that it is the parent/carer who has the main responsibility in nurturing children in faith.
- The number of people who feel that it would be beneficial to have more support and resources to do this and the opportunity to be able to discuss and share with other parent/carers.
- Given the above, how can we encourage people that nurturing faith is not simply the role of the church as has maybe been the thinking for so long?
- How can we encourage, empower and equip parents/carers in this important task?

Read on to find out more about the results.

What is the average rating (out of 10) for the amount of time, effort, prayer, and so on that churches put into the following areas:

- Church services: **8.23**
- Supporting families in their faith at home: **3.62**
- Supporting adults in their faith at work: **3.63**
- Supporting children in their faith at school: **5.22**
- Adult members' personal discipleship: **6.36**
- Pastoral care for adults: **6.88**
- Children's work: **6.96**

It seems that there is a general happiness with the state of church services around the country, with an average rating of 8.23. It also suggests that there is a general satisfaction with the church work that is done within adult discipleship, pastoral care and children's work, with all of these rating comfortably above 6. There seems to be less satisfaction with the support from churches for Christians in the key areas of their lives outside of church, namely home, school and work, with the home and work situation receiving just over the average 3 mark.

Who has the most influence on the life of the child?

- Sunday School teacher: **5**
- Minister: **4**
- Teacher: **18**
- Parent/carer: **244**
- Childminder: **2**

- Peers: **30**

In this question it is clear that an overwhelming majority believe that it is the parent who has the most influence. Those who chose peers referred at times to the fact that peers become increasingly important at the expense of the parents.

Who has primary responsibility for bringing children up in the faith?

- Parent/Carer: **249**
- Church: **12**
- Sunday school teacher or equivalent: **8**
- Unselected: **4**

Again, the overwhelming majority say that it is the parent's responsibility to bring the child up in the Christian faith. A problem that was raised in relation to these results on several occasions is the issue of families in which only one parent is a Christian and how to deal with this sensitively and well. There were several who made comments about it being the parent's responsibility with church support and that this is too often left to Sunday school teachers.

Were you brought up in a Christian home and how do you know?

- Yes: **169**
- No: **52**
- Unsure: **19**

The majority of people who answered this question were in fact brought up in a Christian home, and only a few who said 'no' had absolutely no contact with a church. The reasons people believed theirs to be a Christian home varied greatly but most contained church and Sunday school attendance, reading Bible stories and some form of prayer. Those who were unsure often cited that this wasn't enough and there was no real commitment or discussion within the home. Some who said they weren't from a Christian home also made this point. Another reason for being unsure in a few cases was that only one of the parents was a Christian. It should also be noted that Christian ethics or morality came up in a large number of answers, regardless of whether they said it was a Christian home or not.

Mark the statements you agree with:

- Faith at home means reading the Bible and praying together...: **186**
- Faith at home means talking about God naturally...: **256**
- Faith at home can be expressed as well by discussing reactions to a television programme as by reading the Bible: **214**
- Faith at home will be expressed differently in every family: **30**
- So it is not worth suggesting ways of doing it: **13**

- I get embarrassed talking about faith: **10**
- I am worried about indoctrinating children: **16**
- I don't expect my church to help carers and parents or godparents or grandparents to bring up children in the faith: **5**
- I've never thought about faith at home before: **0**

The first thing to notice about the answers to this question is that everyone had thought about faith at home. However, given the answers from the first question and the general sense of uncertainty about how to go about this issue, it is clearly an area in which many people are looking for ideas and want the church to help them. Also apparent was that almost everyone agreed that faith means talking naturally about God at home, and so this appears to be a key feature of this element.

What is the best thing your church could do for you?

This question received many varied responses. The most common examples that came up were the idea of a forum for parents to provide a support network to each other; activities for both all ages combined and separate ages at times which suit families; finding ways to encourage openness within the family; opportunities to worship and chat as families and parenting courses. Another common answer was the necessity of prayer both for the family and that the family and particularly the children could participate in.

What would an ideal resource would be?

- Book: **62**
- DVD: **76**
- Online resources: **86**
- Chance to discuss with other parents/carers: **150**

A large number of people said that all were needed while some didn't answer this question. The results suggested that people would prefer different mediums. A large number said they would like a chance to discuss with other parents. A further idea was practical and creative ideas for focusing on key issues such as prayer, Bible reading and worship. Another suggestion was a parenting course/small group run through a DVD/book combination and a degree of follow-up.

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