

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MEN - SOME NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS

- In churches across Australia male attendance is 35/36%
- This is replicated in the Anglican Church nationally
- At St Alfred's that figure has been reported as:-  
2001 - 48%; 2006 - 41%; 2011 - 45%
- When dad attends church, the family comes 90% of the time, whereas when mum attends the figure falls to 25-30%
- In our gaols, 90% of inmates are male
- 85 -90% of men come to faith in/around the church
- 30% men have no relationship with their father, 30% have an abusive relationship, and 30% have a superficial relationship; only 10% have a relationship where the son can say "my dad is an emotional ally in my life."  
(Steve Biddulph )

What the latest available National Church Life Survey (NCLS) 2006 indicates.

Some of the following Australia wide observations come from the 2006 NCLS covering over 83,000 responses from one of the major denominations:-

- Males are 9% less likely to be involved in fellowships, clubs, social or other groups in the church (34% cf. 43%)
- Males are 10% less likely to value sharing in Holy Communion/the Eucharist/Lord's supper (43% cf. 53%)
- Males are 5% less likely to value prayer ministry for one another (15% cf.10%)
- Males are 8% less likely to value practical care for one another in times of need (17% cf. 25%)
- Males are 5% less likely to indicate much growth in their faith in the past year (25% cf. 30%)
- Males are 11% less likely to spend daily/weekly time in private prayer, Bible reading, or meditation (40% cf. 51%)
- In worship, males are 4% less likely to experience inspiration, 9% less likely to experience joy, 9% less likely to experience a sense of God's presence, 6% less likely to experience growth in understanding God and 10% less likely to experience being strengthened spiritually.
- When it comes to a strong and growing sense of belonging to their congregation males are 7% less likely to feel connected (48% cf. 55%)
- When it comes to a sense of belonging to their denomination males are 8% less likely to feeling connected (34% cf. 42%)
- Males are 8% less likely to care for someone who was very sick (24% cf. 32%)
- Males are 10% less likely to help someone through a crisis (37% cf. 47%)
- Males are 6% less likely to visit someone in hospital (53% cf. 59 %)
- Males are 7% less likely to give possessions to a needy person (33% cf. 40%)
- Males are 7% less likely to be involved in church based service activities (22% cf. 29%)
- Males are 6% less likely to be involved in community-based welfare groups (24% cf. 30%)
- When it comes to inviting others to church in the past 12 months males are 8% less likely do so (35% cf. 43%)
- Conversely when it comes to being willing, but not inviting someone to church males were in the majority (43% cf. 39%)

Not all of the indicators in this multi faceted survey were less favourable for males, but where there was a gender gap of 5% or more, these have been highlighted above.

According to Richard C. Leonard of Laudemont Ministries: *Sociologists confirm that the best predictor of whether a child will maintain a religious commitment in adult life is not the faith of the mother ... but the faith of the father.*

([www.laudemont.org/a-wail.htm](http://www.laudemont.org/a-wail.htm) <<http://www.laudemont.org/>> 9/12/2004).

A rather obscure but large and important study conducted by the Swiss government in 1994 and published in 2000 revealed some astonishing facts with regard to the generational transmission of faith and religious values. (The full title of the study is: "The Demographic Characteristics of the Linguistic and Religious Groups in Switzerland")

The study is by Werner Haug and Phillippe Warner of the Federal Statistical Office, Neuchatel, and appears in Volume 2 of Population Studies No. 31, a book titled The Demographic Characteristics of National Minorities in Certain European States, published by the Council of Europe Directorate General III, Social Cohesion, Strasbourg, January 2000.

In short, the study reveals: "It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children."

The study reports:

1. If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all.
2. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
3. If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2% of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church!

What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Amazingly, the percentage of children becoming regular goes up from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and up to 44 percent with the non-practicing. This suggests that loyalty to the father's commitment grows in response to the mother's laxity or indifference to religion.

In short, if a father does not go to church--no matter how faithful his wife's devotions--only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). One of the reasons suggested for this distinction is that children tend to take their cues about domestic life from Mom while their conceptions of the world outside come from Dad. If Dad takes faith in God seriously then the message to their children is that God should be taken seriously.