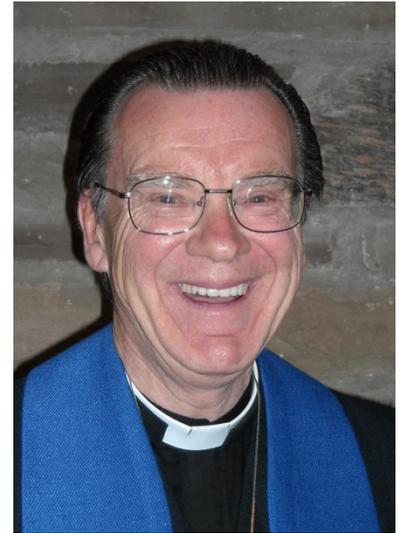


## I've Been Thinking About "Family Day"

The designated holiday on Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup> in most of our provinces was created to help Canadians get through the dark, cold, slippery days of winter – affording us a three-day weekend during the shortest month of the year (which always seems, ironically, like the longest month). On one of my calendars, it shows that British Columbia, normally three hours behind us, has its Family Day a week ahead of us on February 11<sup>th</sup>, making me wonder why we can't synchronize this holiday on the same day from coast to coast – Canadians having a 3-day weekend together – not that I was planning to travel to B.C. to see family as part of this holiday.



A family is a group of people, no two of whom like the same ingredient on a pizza. It is also a group of people in which most often the young children can summarize the family ethos in a simple and direct way much better than the older members, as illustrated by Linda, 9, who went with a neighbour playmate to a revival meeting one night. In telling her experience to her family later, she said, "The preacher asked everyone who had family commotions at their house to raise their hand." Linda said she was the first one to do so.

I offer three guidelines for family life:

The first is for parents to never keep score in their relationship. Don't ever say to your spouse, "I've been doing more than my share. It's not fair." The day you begin to keep score is the day your relationship begins to die.

The second guideline is this: Never be too busy for your children. Don't ever say to them, "Can't you see I'm busy? Come back later!" The day you become too busy for your children is the day your communication with them begins to die. Use kinder, gentler words if a delay is necessary, as it sometimes is.

Let us put a positive spin on six essentials of good family life needed by all children, as advocated by Judge George Edwards:

1. Love, affection and security, preferably with their own parents in their own home, if possible;
2. Full-time adult supervision and the teaching of self control;
3. Parents whom children learn they can love on the basis of mutual trust;
4. A close sense of family unity, where the members eat together, take vacations together, go to church together;
5. Parents who take an interest in the education of their children;
6. Parents who set an example of living in accordance with the principles of their religious faith.

In conjunction with the sixth essential, I would tie in the following short line: *A family altar would alter many a family.*

The third guideline for family life is this: Never miss a day praying for your family. Each life is precious, and one of the greatest gifts we can give each member is to uphold them in prayer before God. A good focus of this prayer is to be thankful for each family member and his or her uniqueness.

Family Day Holiday, a three-day weekend. NO catching up with the laundry or house cleaning on Monday, February 18, your “extra” day. Give your family one of your most precious commodities – TIME, and find that activity or activities and simply have some FUN together. Enjoy!

Wayne