

Skills and Spiritual Gifts (cont)

4. **Cooperate with church leadership** in designing, planning, and implementing family life features and programs as needed for both membership nurture and evangelistic outreach.

These may include:

- Premarital guidance
- Strengthening marriages
- Parent education
- Family worship
- Family finances

5. **Foster a climate of warmth and closeness**, engendering a sense of “familyness” in the congregation and a redemptive spirit toward families in need of support and encouragement.

The Biblical record of ‘family’ provides us a picture of what God has in mind for us as His family-members. We are His children, greatly loved, cherished, nurtured and protected. He reaches out to us with unlimited love and boundless grace.

Through word and ministry Jesus made clear that all who followed Him were part of His family (Mark 3:31-35). In a very real sense, the body of Christ is a family. All Christians, whether married or single, thus exist in a family. As brothers and sisters in ‘family,’ God invites us to love each other and take care of each other. Our church, then, needs to demonstrate and portray this love. We are compelled to be, and act, as God’s loved family.

The strength of the church is based in the spiritual life of its members and families. God expects families to have mutually satisfying relationships (Mal. 4:6). He desires that husbands and wives experience unity (Matt. 19:5, 6), and that parents raise their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The guiding principles of the Bible direct that Christians nurture the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs of the individuals, couples and families who constitute the fabric of fellowship in the church. When the church ministers to the needs of families as Christ did, they are restored to wholeness.

For resources and information on training, log into the members site at sspm.adventistconnect.org or contact your local conference personal ministries director.



THE MINISTRY OF THE **Family Ministries Coordinator**

You may be reading this because you have been asked to serve your local church as a family ministries leader or perhaps you serve on a church nominating committee and are wondering what a family ministries leader is expected to do. In either case, if you understand the church as the body of Christ and understand the call to ministry as experienced by each member, this will help you see the role the family ministries leader fills within a local church.

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The Goals of Family Ministries

The over-arching objective of Family Ministries is to strengthen the family as a discipling centre. The family was established by Divine creation as the fundamental human institution. It is the primary setting in which values are learned and the capacity for close relationships with God and with other human beings is developed.

Family Ministry goals in the local church include:

1. To create a “family of God” experience in every Adventist congregation within the South Pacific Division by fostering an emphasis on grace, a respect for and celebration of diversity, and open, honest communication.
2. To generate a balanced perspective that affirms God’s ideals for relational wellbeing, marital happiness and family living, along with an understanding of the brokenness experienced by individuals, couples and families in a fallen world, and how God’s grace can bring acceptance, forgiveness and renewal.
3. To provide individuals, couples and families access to educational, enrichment and counselling services that enhance the development of their relational skills and improve the quality of their relationships.
4. To affirm and strengthen the home as a disciple-making centre where Adventist Christian values are successfully transmitted to the next generation.
5. To empower families for witness by discovering and using their spiritual gifts in their extended families and in the community around them.

Responsible to

The Family Ministries leader is responsible to the Church Board and the Pastoral Ministries team.

Time Commitment

Ministry to families covers a huge range of possible programs and events as well as data collection and assessment. It is recommended that Family Ministries Leaders work closely with their committee and the pastoral team to ensure they maintain a balance between their commitments to their own families and to the families in the church.



Duties and Responsibilities

The Family Ministries Leader plays a very important role in building and maintaining a focused ministry to families in the church. He or she needs to be a person (or couple) who has a positive attitude about Christ, self, others, and the church, and if possible, should model positive qualities of family life. He or she will have a sincere interest in fostering the wellbeing of all families; be a good communicator; have a keen interest in human relationships, and have an ability to organise. A person already working in one of the helping professions, such as social work, marriage and family counselling or teaching is a real asset in a position of this type.

It is important too, that he/she approach the task of family ministry with an understanding of God’s redemptive plan for families. The leader needs to be able to maintain utmost confidentiality about family matters and know how to refer critical situations for expert care.

Skills and Spiritual Gifts

The Family Ministries leader needs to work closely with the Family Ministries Committee. The Committee which assists, offers counsel, and shares in the responsibility for developing and implementing the goals of Family Ministries within the local church, has the following responsibilities:

1. Assist church leadership in **compiling family demographic data** both within the church and the surrounding community to clarify target groups for family ministry.
2. Assist church leadership in **assessing the needs** of the church members for family life information, education and training, counselling and enrichment programs.
3. **Encourage sensitivity** to the needs of families and the impact of church programs upon them in terms of expenditure of time, energy, money and other family resources.