

Prayer chain - praying for the mountain of Family – Home - Children

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'Family is the **cornerstone** of society' - a statement which for centuries has indicated that the family is the foundation of society. The concept of *family* was based on biblical principles: (husband - wife - children, grandparents - parents - brothers - sisters) and served as a **safe base** for to be yourself, with a space to share love and sadness with each other, to provide support and mutual care.



In the mid-1960s, the family, the cornerstone, was openly attacked, on the basis of so-called ideals of equality, emancipation, individualism ("my freedom!") and tolerance. This traditional family structure has progressively been eliminated from Western society. A great diversity of family forms and experiences has replaced it, which has led to new societal forms through the generations.

The (biblical) model of God and the purpose of the male-female relationship increasingly conforms to social positions, and God's principles are often labeled as out of date and out of fashion. And yet, the prescriptions of the Creator of man for each relationship are always a sound and secure framework, and, if we keep it, we will also receive its blessings and fruits. Marriage is part of God's creative order, it is his original plan (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is described as a mystery (Ephesians 5: 22-33), a picture of something much greater: the love between Christ and the Church. The Messiah receives a body, a bride, a partner, and this is manifested in the marriage covenant.

When man separates himself from the plan and order of God's creation, he becomes disturbed, and together we pay a huge price for it. For example, **the increase of divorces** in Belgium is not a light matter: the rate went from only 6.7% in 1960 to 9.6% in 1970, 20.6% in 1980, 31.9% in 1990, 45.7% in 2000 and 51.2% in 2013; this means that 1 on 2 marriages in Belgium ends in divorce.

For God, the family was and is always meant to be a secure base for the development and the formation of the identity of each of its members, and it is closely linked to his position in the family. When this basic security is lost, it undermines the self-image of the child for its entire life. A **broken family** becomes an unstable place with a lot of emotional pain and confusion. The consequences are significant, especially for the abandoned partner and the children: single mothers are among the most fragile groups in our society. It seems that children of divorced parents live in worse conditions than their peers on average (eg more poverty). Research in Belgium has shown that children under 18 at the time of their parents' divorce are 45% less likely to have a higher education qualification. About 30 to 40% of children become

separated from one of the parents (\pm 1 to 2 years after the breakup). The social network is increasingly **torn apart**. As a result, all the sought and accessible "substitutes" become emergency solutions within which the limits should continue to be set, because the hunger for "happiness and peace of mind" is insatiable when it is not satisfied with what God offers.

The consequences of broken marriages and families affect almost all spheres of society, **socially, emotionally and financially**. The only "solution" that lawmakers proposed for increasing divorce rates was to facilitate divorce. For example, in 2007 adultery as a ground for divorce was dropped, further opening the door to marital infidelity.

The financial situation should not be underestimated either: for example, in Flanders, 7.000 children are placed in foster families; a child in foster care costs society 1 million euros (if he is in a foster family aged 0 to 18); but children in a special care institution for young people cost the state much more. The price paid on an emotional and relational level is impossible to measure. Another example: some want the education policy from kindergarten to teach that everyone can choose his sexual orientation, whether he chooses to be a boy or a girl, adding to the confusion surrounding identity formation.



The WVG (Welfare, Public Health and Family) policy area is desperate for solutions to the growing waiting lists of people (adults, adolescents and children) with psychosocial needs. The poverty of the many broken families is increasing. We are looking for solutions to reduce this poverty but it looks like **a gaping leak with the tap open**.

So if the family is the cornerstone of society, it means that our society is shaking in its foundations. And that the short and long term consequences will prove to be unbearable.

It is necessary and just, as believing Christians, to follow the evolution of "marriage and the family" in our society, without being sucked in. For from what height does the church fall when anarchy increases within its own walls and love (agape) cools down as a result? The Christian Church, like no other, can make its voice heard, state and defend sound principles. And at the same time, she has a pastoral role, encouraging and supporting all vulnerable and injured people, broken families and torn young people.

Bible Verses: Gen. 2: 23-24 + Mat. 19: 4-6 + Mark. 10: 6-8 + Eph. 5: 31-33, 6: 1-4 + Rev. 19: 4-9

Pray:

- May believers be filled with the vision of God's rich plan for marriage and families, children and relationships.
- May bad thoughts and bad patterns (of a worldview based on relationships) be erased and replaced with God's vision, so that believers no longer lower their standards to those of the world.
- May only the principles of God determine the vision of the family, and may the plan of God be visible in the churches of Jesus Christ and in society.
- For the protection of marriages and Christian families. Let them shine like stars in the night.
- For a clear, honest, open and healthy education on this subject in our churches and schools.
- May our young Christians, the new generation, be strong and courageous about this, make the right choices, not shy away from it.
- May Christians and churches actively reach out to vulnerable families, without judgment, but in love ... May these broken people feel warmly welcomed into our congregations.
- Pray for Christian organizations or initiatives working in this area.
- For prophetic voices on this "mountain": people in authority who defend healthy values.
- For policy makers, ministers who legally support a healthy view of marriage and the family.
- Let there also be stronger votes in opposition at European and global level against pressure groups that undermine marriage, family and gender identity.
- May the media and culture see more positive voices emerging and show good examples as a barrier to deterioration.

