Family Planning and Sharing

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Scientific and technological advancements have created many changes in the way in which people live today. Outside pressures and interests on the family members are more numerous and of greater intensity and have made changes in activities within the home. Family roles, or ways of behaving of various members of the family, are changing from a rather rigid to a more flexible pattern.

Young people are marrying at an earlier age; marriages involve couples from greater distances and with more different backgrounds than some years ago.

Divorce has increased considerably in the last half century and although not approved openly, it is not the social disgrace it once was.

With advancement of scientific and technical ways, attitudes have shifted concerning careers. Longer life of our people has brought problems and adjustments that many families never faced a few years ago.

Factors That Build Family Unity

Mutual affection between all members of the family based on each individual's worth as a person.

Feelings of togetherness that are established by an exchange of emotions and sentimental attitudes through the sharing of confidences, disappointments, sorrows, aspirations, and appreciations.

Sympathetic understanding of each other in the family growing out of a developing ability to enter into and share the feelings, attitudes, interests, and experiences of others to such an extent that one is enabled to view these through the eyes of the other.

Temperamental compatibility of family members when temperament is interpreted as the usual or characteristic mood of a person.

Consensus or general agreement or views, values, and goals by members of a family which grow from a type of communication that is intimate, personal, and free-flowing.

Family events, celebrations, and ceremonies that enable members to share in experiences and afford opportunities to give recognition to various family members.

Interdependence of roles by the fitting together of different activities of members to achieve a common goal.

A place in which the family maintains or has in the community by the nature of its relationships to groups and institutions.

Family Planning and Sharing — A Method of Achieving Unity

What is meant by planning and sharing:

- Discussing together is necessary for the purpose of arriving at decisions based on all the resources of all members whether this discussing is called family council, conclave, conference, business meeting, discussion or carries no name at all.
- Makes it possible for each to learn the other's problems, feelings, and ideas.
- In most situations group solutions are better than an individual's.
- Members help set the goals and standards that govern them and develop feelings of belonging and importance.
- A place and time to meet should be appropriate to the need.

Things to remember about planning and sharing:

- Leadership is shared and whatever responsibility for leadership one takes, he should not feel that it gives him power over others.
- Disagreements often arise. Until everyone has had a chance to think and express his ideas and then think some more, the best solution cannot be made.
- Agreement may be reached by one person dominating, majority rule, compromise, or consensus.
- It is necessary to weigh and evaluate ideas — discuss pros and cons to try to see results in the light of facts.

- Though facts are to be considered, feelings are most important even when they have no rational basis and cannot be explained by facts and logic.
- To complete planning and sharing, a way must be found to carry out the resultant plan.

Family planning and sharing operate in decisions made regarding work, money, housing, use of family possessions, recreation, standards of conduct, as well as many other areas.

Results of Planning and Sharing

Builds a unified family through agreement of its members rather than by authority of the head.

Places emphasis upon the individuality of its members and their personality adjustment rather than their unquestioning obedience to the family.

Aids the ability of family members to meet changes in their lives and the world around them.

Children develop the ability for independent thinking, yet retain warm family feelings.

Builds good attitudes toward responsibilities and teaches that every privilege carries with it a responsibility.

Greatly aids the healthy growth of personalities and develops many tools and skills that are important for a happy life.

Gives children training and practice in problem solving and a preparation for new experiences.

Provides the only training that many young people have in family life through the experiences they have in their homes while growing up.

Situations for Discussion

THE FOSTER FAMILY

Situation 1

Mr. Foster, hearing about the good that comes from family planning and sharing, called the family together for that purpose. "You will notice," he said, "that I am installed here as your chairman. I assume there are no objections. The chairman, hearing no objections, will..."
"Mr. Chairman," Anne interrupted.
"Out of order," said Mr. Foster. "Very much out of order when the chairman has the floor."
"But you said you heard no objections, and I want to object."
"Out of order means sit down, and you're out of order," Mr. Foster shouted. "The first job of the council is to apportion the work in the house and yard. Does the chairman hear any suggestions? Jack, I recognize you and you'd better think of something."
Jack only stammered and Mr. Foster said, "Out of order. If no one has any ideas I'll present a plan that we will follow."

QUESTIONS:
1. How much family planning and sharing can take place in this situation? Why?
2. What are some of the things that, in your opinion, are wrong with this procedure?
3. How could the same procedure be improved?

THE BENSON FAMILY

Situation II

Mr. and Mrs. Benson had considered having a family night for some time. The children had asked about one and stated they thought it was a good idea. Mr. Benson was always busy with community work and Mrs. Benson was active in church, civic, and special interest groups. The children were likewise active in school and other groups.

When the parents found that Friday would be free they told the children that they would have a family night and have fun together. The two older children had to give up some previous plans that didn't make them too happy. The three other children were eagerly looking forward to this evening.

When they gathered in the living room, Dad Benson asked, "What should we do?" The only reply was a cold silence. Some arguing developed over TV programs and personal possessions. In short, family night was considered a waste of time.

QUESTIONS:
1. What contributed to a failure in this attempt in a family night?
2. How could the evening have been handled once the family got together?
3. What are your ideas to achieve reasonable success for such an idea?

THE McGraths

Situation III

The McGraths had to decide which of four house plans to choose. Plan A looked good to Faye, but it became obvious that it wouldn't fit on the lot so it had to be put aside. Plan B, Emily's choice, passed the lot test but the contractor's cost of construction was more than they could afford. Well, the fact was plain enough that they had to discard Plan B. The third plan was liked by the senior McGraths very much. But Emily simply couldn't get enthusiastic about it, though she couldn't explain why. The McGraths accepted Emily's opposition as a fact and discarded Plan C. Plan D cost a little more than they had counted on spending but with some figuring they thought that they could do it. It would mean no new furnishings. It also meant that Emily had to give up a rumpus room she had wanted so badly. Too, Faye's bedroom did not meet with her approval. With the help of the contractor, and considering the facts, they were able to come to complete agreement on the plan for their house.

QUESTIONS:
1. Isn't this a lot of work to go through for a house? Why?
2. Why couldn't this have been done in a simpler way?
3. If the senior McGraths liked Plan C so much, why throw it aside?