

Let's Do Something Different With Holidays

Sadie Wohlfahrt, Children's Minister

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Those of you who joined us in the sanctuary this Sunday heard my "Non-Father's Day" moment. Instead of talking about my biological dad, I spoke about three influential Christian mentors in my life; men who play father roles, but are not related to me. And this is why.

I don't like Father's Day.

I don't like Mother's Day either, for that matter.

Yes, you read that correctly.

As a Christian of full faith, I struggle with that great "blessing/curse" of always, in the midst of my celebration and good fortune, wondering how *the other guy* feels.

What about those for whom these "holidays" are painful?

Pastor Kurt touched on many of these individuals in his sermon on Mother's Day, and the list is similar for Father's Day. What about those who have lost their father- not just in death, but through addiction, mental illness, dementia, family rifts? What about those for whom the word "father" does not carry positive connotation? What about single mothers? What about those who have never known their fathers, or whose fathers have been abusive?

I didn't talk about my own father in my children's sermon on Sunday, just in case there was even *one* child there, who might be hurt by this. If one child's heart hurts in our church, my heart hurts. I know they will make plenty of silly "I love you, Dad" Father's Day gifts at school and preschool, and maybe even Sunday school; so I wanted to use worship to speak of "good Christian men that show us God's love." We can all relate to that.

On the afternoon of Mother's Day this past May, I sat at brunch with my children like many other mothers, but I couldn't quite enjoy it. I couldn't stop thinking about all the lonely women, and what they were doing at that very moment... the women who have lost pregnancies- or children, or who struggle with infertility, or estranged relationships with their children, or with their own mothers. I wanted desperately to do something for them. Reach out somehow. As Christians, we are called not to sit and enjoy our blessings for the sake of our own joy, but to set aside our own desires, and share with those who are in despair; the least, the lost, the last, and the lonely. *"By this everyone will know you are my disciples; that you love one another."* (John 13:35)

I started brainstorming for next Mother's Day. What about a Healing and Hope brunch for those who are struggling? Those that have nowhere else to go? If this is tugging on your heart as well, please contact me and we will see where the spirit leads us.

Let me also challenge the rest of you. How can you give back on these "holidays"? How can you start the process, alongside your children, of thinking first of *others*, and then yourselves?

This is the very reason we are flipping VBS on its head this year, and digging into service projects: to begin the lifelong process of learning how to put others first; to put our faith in action. To reach out, rather than to grab in.

Let's try it on other days throughout the year! On Mother's Day and Father's Day, how could your family minister to the motherless or fatherless? Could you take gifts, messages of hope, or gifts of your time and energy, to children's shelters? The women's shelter? Havenwood? On Christmas, does your family buy gifts for an angel tree, or serve at a soup kitchen? How do you begin the conversation with your children, about those who are not so fortunate?

"But Sadie, I might get my hands dirty. It might be awkward. I don't know how. I am not sure what to say. What if I can't relate to them?"

Please get your hands dirty. Please do something that feels awkward at first. Please let your children watch you. Please get uncomfortable. And then let's get together and talk about it.

Jesus didn't promise that being a disciple would be easy. He promised he'd be with us "*always, to the end of the age.*" (Matt.28:20)

Grace. Grace. Grace,

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