

“HE RESTRAINED THEM NOT”

James Sanders

The life of the Old Testament figure, Eli, is indeed a remarkable one. Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, the fourth son of Aaron and therefore was of the tribe of Levi. Combined in this man of God were the offices of both High Priest and Judge. It was the first time in Israel that one man had held both offices at the same time. But such was indicative of the goodness and righteousness of Eli; it seems everyone respected him. For some forty years Eli judged the nation of Israel (1st Samuel 4:18). His character was one of godliness and devotion but was not without blemish. Phineas and Hophni, the sons of Eli, were as wicked as their father was righteous. And to make matters worse, Phineas and Hophni were put into the office of a priest even though they lacked Eli's virtue and zeal (1st Samuel 1:3). The result was nothing short of extraordinary! The conduct of Eli's children literally shocked the people of Israel. Because of Phineas and Hophni, men came to abhor the offering of the Lord (1st Samuel 2:17). Things were very bad; the sad state of affairs was almost beyond description.

But when the aged High Priest learned of the scandals being committed by his sons, he only administered a gentle rebuke. Apparently Eli had always so corrected his children. Instead of reproving his boys while they were small, Eli perhaps reasoned with them and viewed their mischievous conduct with but a look of disfavor. But now Phineas and Hophni were no longer children and with them had grown their mischievous habits. The Scriptures assert that Eli was largely to blame. *“He restrained them not”* (1st Samuel 3:13). Eli had failed to restrain his sons while they were young and now it was too-late! As the twig had been bent, so had it grown. Now the sternest rebuke would prove ineffectual. Alas! What a lifetime of waste! All those years of effort and sacrifice in vain. Eli had failed and failed miserably; he had let his sons down when they needed him the most!

The Scriptures urge: *“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying”* (Proverbs 19:18). Doubtless, Eli's philosophy was, “Boys will be boys.” But someone has well said, “Boys will be boys, but those same boys one day will be men.” A child needs discipline and guidance when he is young. Then there is hope. Parents, open your eyes before it is too late! Now is the time to restrain your children. Now is the time to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This opportunity of youth, once present,

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brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God’ (Mark 10:13-14). Children's church is wrong because Jesus has already rebuked those who would keep children from Him.

Since children require supervision, adults who are minding them in their separate church will be left out along with them. This is inappropriate. Paul told the saints in Corinth, *“when you come together as a church”* to *“come together in one place”* (1st Corinthians 11:19, 20). That is not what happens when some church members are babysitting in one room while all the other church members are worshiping in another.

Children's church will have a deleterious effect on the future. Young adults who age out of children's church will not have been trained how to behave properly in the assemblies because they have been excluded from them. Instead of young men obeying the gospel and beginning to word public prayers, read Scripture aloud, serve the Lord's Supper, take up the collection, lead songs, and even preach brief exhortations, as they should, there will, rather, be young adults entering an environment previously concealed from them, who, having never seen what worship looks like, will not be ready to serve, and might not even be ready to sit still and learn with attention and reverence. These youth may, as many do, opt to leave church altogether when they are no longer being coddled and entertained. If they choose to remain, their generation will be tempted to subvert proper worship assemblies, reshaping them to align with the experiences they grew up with. Even if they choose to remain without pressing for changes, there will likely be trends of uninvolved and immature spectators who are unprepared to step into new responsibilities.

Because of the past, the present, and the future, children's church is not a viable option in a sound congregation.

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never returns. Father or mother, have you really restrained (guided) that wee creature who is so fresh from God? Be honest with yourself. Think of Eli. Think of yourself. Think of the little ones entrusted to your care. Will you fail them when they need you the most?

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Ladies' Study @ 6:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Cancer is a growth; therefore,
not all growth is healthy."

– Richie Thetford

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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WE DON'T DO CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Bryan Matthew Dockens

It is common in most denominations, and in many digressive churches of Christ, for youngsters to be entertained in a separate room while adults assemble to worship. The practice of "Children's Church" must be repudiated because of the past, the present, and the future.

Children's church did not exist in the past, specifically the first century. There is a pattern which must be emulated (2nd Timothy 1:13; Philippians 3:17). If a practice is not exemplified by the church in the New Testament, then the church of the twenty-first century ought to refrain. Since the inspired record never teaches about children's church (cf. Hebrews 7:14), engaging in such now constitutes a sinful addition to the word of God (2nd John 9; Revelation 22:18-19).

Children's church is a detriment in the present. When a prayer concludes and the loudest "Amen" in the room comes from a toddler, the whole congregation is, rightfully, encouraged. Likewise, hearing the voices of little ones carry over the singing of the whole assembly brightens the countenances of all. "Hallelu-JAH! What a Sav-**IOR!**" sung emphatically by a child is one of the most uplifting sounds the ear can hear. "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise" (Matthew 21:16). To deprive the church of this enriching experience, and that deliberately, is shameful. Doing so ignores Jesus' straightforward admonition to the contrary! "They – Continued on page 3 –

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