

DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM FOR ADDRESSING CAUSES AND EFFECTS
OF FAMILY TENSIONS AMONG COUPLES OF RING ROAD
BAPTIST CHURCH, IBADAN

A PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY,
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this project was to develop and implement a curriculum for addressing the causes and effects of family tensions among couples of Ring Road Baptist Church, Ibadan. It was borne out of the challenges faced in the researcher's church of constantly having to settle quarrels among member couples. The tensions that go on between couples often go to have counter effects on the psychological, social and spiritual life of the partners in marriage and these many times are transferred on other members of the family too. The church is often affected with the squabbles and unpleasant situations happening among couple members, since the family forms the nucleus of the church. The project examined causes of tension as reviewed by literature as finance, social, spiritual and cultural. The biblical and theological imports revealed that God established the family as a means to showcase His divine love to the church, and which is expected to be manifested among couples. Two questionnaires were employed in the process of this project. The pre-test which had fifty-eighty participants in attendance revealed that many couples had their pre-conceived ideas and fantasies about marriage and were not adequately informed about their partners. Some were not matured and were not aware of the impending challenges of marriage and family living; hence they became victims of circumstance of tensions. The teaching session was used to expose the couples to their roles and God's expectation in family relationship. Through this they became more conscious of their human personality, and knowledgeable about the causes and effects of their tensions. Both the pre-test and post-test questionnaire returned were statistically analysed. The post-test showed that about 63.8 percent of those present resolved to take positive steps in line with the teachings of the curriculum in handling tensions in their family relationships. The project recommended that both pastors and church should be more concerned with couples in tension-prone situations and show love to them. The church through her pastoral ministries should establish and encourage premarital and family life counseling sessions for all intending and married couples of the church. Pastors should preach series of sermons on marriage and family life at least once in a quarter. Economic and financial empowerments of family members should be embarked upon by the church and pastors were encouraged to intensify efforts, on visitation to families at home and should expand their horizon through training and re-training in family related courses through seminars, conferences and workshops.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The focus of this study has been on addressing causes and effects of tensions among couples, with the aim of helping couples to understand their characteristics, see reasons for actions and reactions which go to affect their partners majorly negatively, with the aim of helping to develop and inculcate into the participants positive attitudes that will lead to peaceful family relationship.

From this project, a number of conclusions can therefore be drawn. First, that marriage is God's initiated institution. The relationship is tension-prone because of human nature and that, there is no marriage without its attending challenges. Through the biblical and theological portrays it was also seen that, God established the family as a means to show case His agape love for the church. He expected peaceful and

happy family relationship. Where there were tensions, God expected a heart of love, forgiveness and reconciliation to take place.

It can also be concluded that while there are many opportunities abounding in the church for exploitation by couples for their advantage to improving better relationships, many still deny themselves of such. The church must not abandon or neglect couple members in tension-prone situations, but create a conducive environment that could facilitate peaceful co-existence among couples. Pastors must rise to the challenges by preaching biblical sermons on marriage and family relationship, be open at sharing with couples in counseling sessions and organize a periodic seminars and workshops on marriage and family living.

The implementation of this curriculum, through the pre-test showed that many of the couples became victims of circumstances, due to their lack of adequate knowledge of whom their partners were, immaturity in time of choice, financial and economic pressure, and lack of proper biblical guidance which had brought tensions in their family relationships. By the implementation of the curriculum, many couples became aware of their personality, the causes of the tensions peculiar to their families, the effects that such tensions had had on their relationships. The implementation had drawn on some godly ways of handling tensions and effective ways of communication which will lead to good, peaceful and joyous family relationship.

The Post-test reports showed an attitudinal change in the couples' relationship as 63.8 percent of those present resolved to take steps as taught in the sessions to quell their tensions and to live happily in their family relationship.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Pastors and churches should establish and strengthen pre-marital and family life counseling for all intending, and married couples and they should be encouraged to attend.
2. Churches should help tension-infested family victims by being friendly to them and provide a conducive atmosphere for free interactions in worship, retreats and enrichment programmes.
3. Pastors should preach on marriage and family life at least once in a quarter in order to strengthen existing families. He can expand his scope of knowledge through short term courses on pastoral counseling. He should also intensify efforts at pastoral visitation to couples at home in order to assess and forestall on the spot family tensions.
4. Churches should embark on economic and financial empowerment to family members in employment crises. Training for skills acquisition and advancement of soft loans for those interested in small scale business establishments.