

Is Normal Good Enough?

By Deacon Tim Sullivan

There used to be a time when, for children and adults, normal was a good thing. Churches, schools and organizations generally upheld basic, traditional values and morality. Parents wanted their children to be normal.

That time ended about 50 years ago. With the Vietnam War, the hippie movement, the sexual revolution, dramatic changes in technology and so on, what is normal today is considerably different from the normalcy that prevailed in the past.

It seems as if there is this magnetic attraction in our country to whatever is new. We don't want to seem outdated, regardless of our age. There is strong and constant pressure to keep up with the times.

One of the fears that has challenged parents during the last several decades is the threat of peer pressure among children and especially teens. What is rarely discussed is the power of peer pressure among parents. My experience has been that, in making decisions about raising their children, many parents go by what other parents are doing.

I've made many mistakes as a parent, but one of my strengths on many parenting issues has been to make a break from what is normal. I frequently told my children that I could care less what other parents were doing, that our family would be guided by our own standards.

There are attitudes and behaviors even today that are normal and good. But there are many that are not. We have to be very discerning as parents about what has a positive effect on our children and what does not, and to act accordingly.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.