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Children need more than 'quality time' with fathers



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There was a doctor who, like many doctors, spent virtually all of his time on his medical practice. When he wasn't working, he played golf, attempting to unwind from the pressures of his professional life.

The doctor had a son 12 years of age. One day, he asked him, "Dad, how much do you make?"

"Well, son," the father replied, "After subtracting expenses, I make about \$100 an hour." The boy thought for a moment, then said, "I need 40."

The father asked why. The son responded, "I have \$60 that Aunt Mary gave me for my birthday. If I can get another \$40, we could spend our time together."

Here's another story, this one from our own diocese. The father was in sales. He made a good living, but he, too, was gone all the time. One night, he was able to join the family at dinner. He asked his young son how baseball was going. The son replied, "Lousy. I strike out all the time because my father won't practice with me."

The son's comment struck to his father's heart. That night, the father and his wife discussed the need for the father to be more active in the daily life of his family.

They agreed that he should seriously consider changing jobs, even if that meant a significant reduction in income.

Eventually, the father did quit his job. He accepted a new position that paid approximately half the income of his prior position but offered regular hours without travel. The family struggled to adjust to a new lifestyle, but they were happy to have their father back. God blessed them, and over a period of time the father received significant increases in pay.

There are many other examples in our own diocese of fathers and their families who have sacrificed income for the sake of the spiritual and emotional well-being of their children. There's an

airline pilot who quit a lucrative position and bought a farm near Claremore so that his family could live simply and have a father who was physically and spiritually present to his children.

There's a commercial draftsman from Broken Arrow who was working two jobs to meet the financial demands of his family. He and his wife made serious cuts in their spending habits so that he could quit one of his jobs and spend more time at home.

In my own case, for many years I was involved in entertaining the children, taking them to athletic events, teaching them to play basketball, that sort of thing. I was active in their recreational lives. But what children need is fathers who care about their souls. I left the spiritual development of my children to my wife and to Catholic schools. It's different now, and although my input is often awkward and unappreciated, there's no going back.

Fathers, do what you have to do for the spiritual well-being of your children. Your offspring might need spiritual nourishment from you more than the material goods you provide. Our closing verse is from Sirach 3:9: "A father's blessing gives a family firm roots."