



## WHAT MEN IN THE CHURCH NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FOSTER CARE

### **We need to care about this issue because God cares deeply about it.**

Scripture is filled with verses where God commands us to take care of the fatherless, the marginalized, and the oppressed. Psalm 68:5-6a strongly introduces God as “A father to the fatherless and the oppressed” and says “he sets the lonely in families.” If God sees this as a fit title for Himself it should motivate us to find out why and see where the answer leads us.

### **Men uniquely have a critical opportunity to help reshape tragic and distorted fatherhood views projected on God.**

Sadly, many kids in foster care have unhealthy and even abusive experiences with men and earthly fathers. This can be a true barrier to understanding the love of their heavenly father. We are NEEDED to shatter this barrier!

### **Part of leading well is listening well to our wives.**

So often God speaks through their soft hearts. If your wife has been “bugging” you about getting involved in foster care it may just be God himself speaking to YOU. Countless men have been summoned to foster care through the sensitive listening of their wives to the Holy Spirit. We need to listen well and pray often for discernment.

### **The gospel is both our motivation and demonstration in foster care.**

*“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”* John 14:18. When we step into broken stories and meet kids where they are in their pain and uncertainty we are demonstrating and living out the very thing Jesus did for us. He pursued us before we were cleaned up, he sacrificed before we were grateful, and loved us right where we were. We are uniquely positioned in foster care to mirror this powerful picture of the gospel to the many watching around us as well.

**Foster care has lots of different on ramps for getting involved.**

Single or unmarried men can also have an incredible impact. Single men can become foster parents! Becoming a mentor, helping provide tangible needs for foster families, helping promote awareness, donating your skills, and simply getting to know your friend's foster kids are all ways you can step into God's call for men to get involved with foster care. As Pastor Tony Merida has said, "Get off the blogs and get on the blocks."

**We need to see foster care as spiritual warfare as much as it is child welfare.**

This isn't Mary Poppins dropping in to watch someone else's kids. It is waging war behind enemy lines as "the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 Foster care is a spiritual battleground. In some cases, stories of family dysfunction and abuse run deep, affecting multiple generations in a family. The statistics of the 26,000 who annually age out of foster care are horrifying and staggering in terms of pregnancy, homelessness, addiction, and incarceration rates. These kids are hurting. Their biological parents are hurting. This battle needs reinforcements. We can step in and help change the trajectory of an entire family's future by helping a child in foster care see that their family patterns of things like indifference, addictions, and abuse can end.

**Foster care engages our biological kids on an incredible family mission and adventure TOGETHER.**

Foster care provides a cool opportunity for your biological kids to find unique ways God has gifted them. You'll even find your younger kids will be equipped in ways you aren't! God knew this. He is equipping them as He is equipping you and your wife. Few other opportunities exist that allow your family to live on mission together in the rhythms of everyday life within the very walls of your house.

**Foster care is a fun adventure.**

Exposing kids in foster care to new experiences, new foods, new hobbies, and visiting new places is super rewarding and an exciting part of the foster care journey. As important, is letting them share with you the things they know and love. Your best fishing or mountain biking buddy may just be your new teen foster son or daughter!

**Foster care is a risk worth taking.**

Some of your well-meaning Christian friends will try to talk you out of it. It requires a step of faith to welcome a kid into your family. Faith often feels like taking a risk, but no matter how fearful that sounds, imagine how scary it is to be a kid who is removed from their family and placed into strangers' families? In the words of America's Kids Belong President-Brian Mavis, "These kids have taken too many risks. Now it's time for the grown ups to step up and take the risks so the kids don't have to anymore."