

# CIRCLE YOUR FAMILY WAGONS

Have you ever heard the phrase “circle the wagons”? It is a term associated with pioneer times when the wagon trains would be traveling together to their new lives and homes. When the wagon train would stop, the families would circle the wagons. This afforded them protection from attacks from outside the circle and a place to keep their livestock and children safe inside the circle. In today’s society, there are many things to protect our families from - too many to list them.

God has truly placed a burden on my heart for families. I believe that God has a design for families that has not changed from the beginning although over time that design has been distorted by man because of laziness, apathy, and convenience.

One wagon in our wagon train should be a patriarchal leader. The father of the family was to be the one responsible for the family - spiritually, financially, academically, etc. The patriarch was to equip his sons to lead, protect, and provide for their families while still seeking wise counsel from him for as long as he was able to provide that wise counsel. The patriarch did not cease to be a counselor/mentor when his sons married and had their own families; reaching such a stage in their lives just meant that they needed MORE counseling/mentoring. Upon his death, then it was time for the sons to become the patriarch of their families. For some reason, in our society, the older a person becomes, the less value they are considered to have. I believe the Bible clearly teaches that we are to seek counsel from others, regardless of our age or stage in life.

A second wagon in our wagon train should be multigenerationalism and not stand-alone individual family units. As parents and grandparents age, they should be taken care of by the children and grandchildren. I think the Amish have the right idea with the Dawdy Haus, or grandfather house. This is a separate smaller structure that they build on their property as the residence of elderly family members so that they can have them nearby to take care of them. Since the residence is smaller, there is less work for the aging parents or grandparents, but they are still close enough to be included in the day-to-day lives of the family.

Another wagon is the evangelization of families. Just think, if every family evangelized their own family members, it would drastically reduce the number of missionaries needed around the world! I believe that is part of our call as a family ~ to make sure that our children and grandchildren are properly and persistently evangelized and taught the ways of God. We, as parents, are responsible for every aspect of our children’s lives ~ especially spiritually. That responsibility should never be passed on to the church or the school.

The next wagon is working together as a family. Do you ever wonder when the downfall of the family truly began? It’s a proven fact that divorce greatly increased and became more common after World Wars when the wives had been working in the factories to replace the husbands who had gone off to war. The wives became independent enough to function alone and provide monetarily for self. But think back to colonial times and pioneer days. Most of the families farmed and the whole family ~ from the oldest to the youngest ~ was involved in some way.

Those that didn't farm, but offered services ~ like running the general store or a boarding house ~ still involved the whole family as much as possible. They worked together and played together and family was important. Nowadays, the lives of our family members are segregated, with each family member having a different job and/or interests. It would be interesting to see how the family in general was affected by the transition of the fathers from home-based businesses to industry. What would happen if the fathers left the hustle and bustle of the everyday workplace and came home? Although farming might not be your family's choice, there are still vast opportunities available to each and every family for daddy to be home and to involve family members in a family-based business. It might take some work and some planning and lots of time to achieve, but it's never too late to start.

Another analogy for this "wagon train" would be wagons of families making up the wagon train of the church. We as families need to stand together against attacks from the world, admonish one another, encourage one another, love one another, and support one another.

Make sure your family is safe from outside attacks by Satan and the world to the best of your ability with God's power and strength. Make sure that what goes on within the circle is God-honoring and God-pleasing and the very best for your family. Never settle for less than God's best. Circle your wagons today!

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