

# Make This Feast a Family

*By keeping the Feast of Tabernacles we celebrate God's Kingdom in advance. And the joy of God's Kingdom should be present, in type, in our physical families today. In this special section you will learn vital keys to building family harmony for this Feast.*

## Fine Tune Your Marriage NOW

*As husband and wife, resolve to make this Feast a turning point — for the better! — in your marriage.*

By Richard Rice

**S**top and think: The Feast of Tabernacles pictures God's Kingdom.

And God's Kingdom is God's Family — God's children ruling, under Jesus Christ, over this world — and eventually the universe — teaching and administering God's government and laws.

God Himself is a Family, as Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong has explained. Truly called and converted Christians are to be born into the Family of God at the return of Jesus Christ (I John 3:2, I Cor. 15:51-53).

When Jesus Christ returns to restore God's government to this earth, He is going to marry God's Church — and the Church must be clean, pure, spotless, ready to unite with Christ in the perfect marriage (Rev. 19:7-9).

Now consider this: Can we, who are to wed Christ, allow conflicts, frustrations, selfish motiva-

tions to dominate our physical marriages now?

No! Now is the time to get our marriages "back on the track" — make them pleasing to God, preparing our physical families for life in God's spiritual Family.

The Feast of Tabernacles symbolizes the kind of marriage relationship that should exist in every home in God's Church. It pictures the peace, harmony and close love that Jesus Christ and His Bride will share.

Determine now to make this coming Feast a turning point in your marriage relationship. Make this your happiest Feast ever.

### Where to start

Even though the Feast is only weeks away, you still have time to embark on a program to set your marriage in order. Plan for a Feast that will bring you as husband and wife closer together.

Study and apply the admonitions in Ephesians 5:21-28. Begin to iron out the wrinkles in your marriage — fine tune your mar-

riage, so to speak — committing your plans to God in prayer.

Ask God to help you appreciate, in a new way, the partner He has given you — to reawaken the love you and your husband or wife had for each other when you married. Reminisce on your courting days, honeymoon and first few months of marriage. Seek to rekindle the excitement you had for each other then.

Talk out differences or irritations. Pinpoint the areas that have caused the most trouble and that will likely rise again. Listen carefully while your mate is speaking in order to understand his or her point of view, including the sore spots.

Determine to change. Ask God to help you through the power of His Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5, Eph. 3:16, 20). As you start drawing closer as a couple, resolve to continue to do so throughout the Feast season.

Bring your children into the picture — get them involved in your plans. Engage in formal as well as informal family discussions.

You can have special Bible studies on the purpose and meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, explaining to your children why we travel to another place, why we stay in temporary accommodations.

Your whole family can pray for the success and safety of not only your own Feast, but also for the protection and benefit of other brethren around the world. Ask God to help each of you to be kind, cooperative and giving, thereby helping others to have an enjoyable Feast, also.

### Build anticipation

As the Feast draws closer, spend some time each day talking about it, building up the excitement and anticipation. Discuss your family's Feast goals and how to achieve them. Start planning

# Affair

what you can do to make this Feast special for each family member. Strive to accommodate, in balance and wisdom, everyone's wishes and desires wherever possible. Each person must keep in mind the needs of each other person in the family.

You may want to give some second tithe to your children ahead of time so that they may buy special gifts for themselves and others. Plan a family shopping trip sometime before or during the Festival period.

Do some research on the area where you will be attending the Feast and find out what it offers in the way of educational and recreational opportunities. Obtain maps and anticipate what you'll see en route as well.

## Let nothing spoil your Feast

During the Feast we may have to sacrifice some of the creature comforts we are accustomed to at home. Family members will spend about two weeks or more in close proximity, traveling in the car and sharing a room or a small apartment. In such circumstances, irritations can easily develop. Tempers can flare.

But try to avoid family arguments that ruin the Festival for everyone — and that mar the picture we are trying to paint. Strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation and teamwork.

The father, as head of the family, should take the lead and set the example. He should be the one to exemplify kindness and consideration. If he does, his wife and children will be inspired to follow in his footsteps. Each father should think ahead about how to make the Feast most enjoyable and profitable for his wife and family.



If you are the father, consider this: Your wife has had a busy, tiring year, especially if she has small children, and needs a break just as much as you do. Therefore, make the Feast special for your helpmate, partner and the mother of your children. Plan to help her with the details of preparing for services. Entertain the children while she is getting ready. Look for ways you can lighten her responsibilities.

In everything you do, work at being kind, courteous and always encouraging, following Christ's example in His relationship with the Church (Eph. 5:25).

Older children can be assigned responsibilities such as helping with the dishes, making beds or preparing breakfast. This not only helps ease Mother's load, but teaches teamwork.

Parents should set the example for their children in helping and serving one another, practicing the *give* way rather than the *get* way. Point out how much more pleasant it is for everyone when

we have love and peace in our homes.

## Concentrate on the Feast's spiritual aspect

With the excitement and business of preparing for the Feast, it is easy to allow physical activities to interfere with your spiritual life. Don't let this happen — keep God at the center of your plans.

Maintain a schedule of daily prayer and Bible study. Remember, God has commanded your presence at the Feast that you may learn to rejoice and to fear Him (Deut. 14:23-26). Be sure to put Him first.

Bear in mind that the Feast symbolizes the wonderful world tomorrow, when peace and love will reign throughout the earth.

Your marriage and family life should typify the spirit and atmosphere of that glorious time. Make it your goal as a family — husband, wife and children — to picture God's soon-coming Kingdom in the way you observe this coming Feast season. □

Illustrations by Stan Gorman