



Ephesians 1:11a: "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance"

Joshua 24:15b: "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"

Guide for Christian group discussions lead by the leaders of the Lutheran Women's Association



Harmonious family

2023, September

Preface

A harmonious family is not outside the Holy Scriptures but has been God's intention from the very beginning. Humans were created by God in a world where basic needs were fully met so that their lives would be harmonious and orderly (Gen. 1 and 2).

A close relationship with God and a shared perspective with Him are the guarantees that unite a couple (heart, mind, vision, goal). Christ's Love is the source that nourishes the love between spouses. Their life within that love of Christ is what allows them to pass it on to future generations.

Marriage has a **PLAN** established by God to bring harmony to the household. When this plan is not followed, it causes spiritual, physical, mental, and social disorder, which defines health in its fullness. In other words, health is the harmony of the whole person.

This is the PLAN established by God :

- God created humans as male and female (Gen. 1:27d).
- One man and one woman were blessed by God for marriage (Gen. 2:18-23; Eph. 5:28-29). Therefore, cohabitation (common-law marriage) not blessed by the state and church, adultery/polygamy, same-sex marriage, and marriage outside of humans are not God's will.
- Leave father and mother, unite with the spouse, become one flesh, and then have offspring. If sexual intercourse occurs before marriage, or if the couple does not leave their parents or is not independent, the household is disrupted (Gen. 1:28, Gen. 2:24).

Marriage according to God is holy and precious because He is the foundation of harmony in the family, society, church, and nation.



Rom. 11:36

*"For of Him and through Him and to Him
are all things, to whom be glory forever.
Amen."*

Acknowledgments

We thank God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the time, physical, mental, and spiritual health given to the participants to complete this document and guide. He provided collaborators from abroad and exemplary models to adapt this guide to the Malagasy context and language so Christians may have "Harmonious Families".

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We thank the **Lutheran Health Department (SALFA)**, led by the General Director, for their constant concern for the welfare of God's people and for seeking funding to link God's will with health services, especially Maternal and Child Health.

We thank the donor, **Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH)**, for the funding provided to develop this guide for the benefit of Christian families.

Finally, we thank the leaders of the **Lutheran Women's Association** who worked tirelessly to develop this document. May God bless all Christian households to truly become "Harmonious Families".

Glory be to God alone.

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Topic 1 : Mutual Love of Spouses

Goal :

For couples to love each other according to God's will to harmonize family life.

Guidelines

Facilitator: Leader from the Lutheran Women's Association.

Participants: 4 to 6 couples (8-12 people), preferably in childbearing age.

Duration: 40 to 60 minutes.

- ✓ Write the Word of God in advance on large paper so it is easy for participants to read.
- ✓ Welcome participants to their designated places. Ensure the leader can maintain eye contact with all participants.
- ✓ Start the session with prayer: ask for God's presence, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, mental clarity for participants and the leader, focus, and the strength for participants to persevere until the end.
- ✓ Introduction of participants (done in the form of a game).
- ✓ Presentation of the discussion goals and the agenda.
- ✓ Establishing ground rules: raise your hand before speaking, put phones on silent/vibrate, speak loudly, everyone participates, respect each other's opinions, manage time...
- ✓ Ask one participant to read the selected Holy Scripture.
- ✓ The leader reads all the questions.
- ✓ Lead the participants through the discussion:
 - Take each question one by one.
 - Allow participants to express their opinions freely on each question.
 - Guide the emerging ideas to align with the main theme.
 - Synthesize all ideas to align with the main theme.
 - Incorporate new ideas that strengthen the conclusion.

- ✓ Ask at least two participants (one man and one woman) to share the message that struck them most during the discussion.
- ✓ The leader concludes the session with prayer: pray that everything discussed becomes a reality in their lives, pray for the love between spouses to remain steadfast, and for them to be a visible example of how Christ loved the church.

Biblical Reflection

Ephesians 5 : 22-33 (NIV)

- 22.** *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.*
- 23.** *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.*
- 24.** *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*
- 25.** *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*
- 26.** *to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,*
- 27.** *and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*
- 28.** *In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*
- 29.** *After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church*
- 30.** *for we are members of his body.*
- 31.** *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*
- 32.** *This is a profound mystery but I am talking about Christ and the church.*
- 33.** *However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

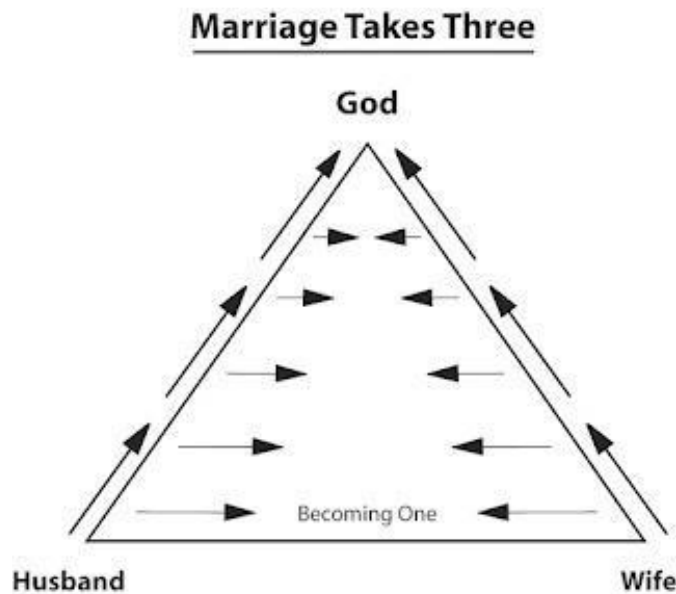
Discussion and Questions

1. What is being discussed in this passage of Scripture?
2. Who and what are mentioned here? (List them)
3. According to this, to whom is the husband compared, and to what is the wife compared?
4. What is the husband's responsibility toward the wife?
5. What is the wife's responsibility toward the husband?
6. According to this Scripture, what is the foundation of marriage?
7. According to this Scripture, what makes marriage precious/sacred?

Key Points for the Leader

1. **Topic:** It discusses Christian marriage or the Christian home. (*Guideline: Bring the participants back to the main theme.*)
2. **Subjects mentioned:** The husband, the wife, the church, Christ, and their respective responsibilities. (*Note: Do not list the specific responsibilities yet.*)
3. **Comparisons:** The husband is compared to Christ who loves the church; the wife is compared to the church which submits to Christ. (*Note: Explain the deeper meaning of these relationships—Christ/Husband, Wife/Church—in questions 4 and 5.*)
4. **The husband's responsibility is to LOVE his wife.** Love her just as Christ loved the church [Verse 25]:
 - A giving love, seeking nothing in return, unconditional, and limitless (loving "even if...") so that his wife may reach perfect goodness in all aspects [Verses 26–27].
 - There is no gift greater than this from God; if there is a quality of goodness you wish to see in her, bestow it upon her through your actions.
 - No violence in any form: physical, psychological, moral, financial, or spiritual (e.g., forcing her to serve another god).
5. **The wife's responsibility is to SUBMIT to her husband.** Just as the church submits to THE LORD (Christ) [Verse 24]: accepting the husband's love, obeying the husband, and respecting the husband (respecting him in speech, in dress, and in all things) [Verse 22].
6. **The Foundation of Marriage: The Love of Christ**

- The love of Christ is the primary model/foundation in marriage. Look toward Christ rather than only at each other; if a couple only looks at one another, they will constantly see each other's negative traits.



The closer one gets to Christ, the more connected the couple becomes.

- *Analogy:* "Raleva's Ox-Cart." Raleva represents Christ, the cart represents the household, and the two oxen represent the husband and the wife. A household that accepts Christ's direction will reach its goal.

7. The Sacredness of Marriage: It reflects the relationship between Christ and the church.

"But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3)

CASE STUDY : When one spouse is not a Christian

1 Peter 3:1–7 (NIV)

1. Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,
2. when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

3. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.
4. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.
5. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands,
6. like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.
7. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Corinthians 7:14 (NIV)

For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

- **The Wife:** Should have worthy conduct outwardly and goodness inwardly.
- **The Husband:** Should live well with his wife, respecting and loving her.

Topic 2 : Man as an Example

Goal:

For the father to take full responsibility as the head of the family, becoming a model of the fear of God.

Guidelines

Facilitator: A leader from the Lutheran Women's Association

Participants : Men aged 18 and older, married or single (8-12 people, with half of them being married).

Duration : 40min - 60min.

- ✓ Write the Word of God in advance on large paper so it is easy for participants to read.
- ✓ Welcome participants to their designated places. Ensure the leader can maintain eye contact with all participants.
- ✓ Start the session with prayer: ask for God's presence, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, mental clarity for participants and the leader, focus, and the strength for participants to persevere until the end.
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- ✓ The leader reads all the questions.
- ✓ Lead the participants through the discussion :
 - Take each question one by one.
 - Allow participants to express their opinions freely on each question.
 - Guide the emerging ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.

- Synthesize all ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.
 - Incorporate new ideas that strengthen the conclusion.
- ✓ Ask at least two participants to share the message that struck them most during the discussion.
 - ✓ The leader concludes the session with prayer: pray that everything discussed becomes a reality in their lives, pray for all men to become role models within the home, the community, the church, and the nation.

Biblical Reflection

Judges 13:2-25 (NIV)

2. *A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to conceive.*
3. *The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son.*
4. *Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean.*
5. *You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."*
6. *Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name.*
7. *But he said to me, 'You will become pregnant and have a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the day of his death.'"*
8. *Then Manoah prayed to the Lord: "Pardon me, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."*
9. *God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her.*

10. *The woman hurried to tell her husband, "He's here! The man who appeared to me the other day!"*
11. *Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, "Are you the man who talked to my wife?" "I am," he said.*
12. *So Manoah asked him, "When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy's life and work?"*
13. *The angel of the Lord answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her.*
14. *She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her."*
15. *Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, "We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you."*
16. *The angel of the Lord replied, "Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the Lord." (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the Lord.)*
17. *Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the Lord, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?"*
18. *He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding."*
19. *Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the Lord. And the Lord did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched:*
20. *As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground.*
21. *When the angel of the Lord did not appear again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the Lord.*
22. *"We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!"*
23. *But his wife answered, "If the Lord had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now announced this to us."*
24. *The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him,*

25. *and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.*

Job 1 : 1–5 (NIV)

1. *In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.*
2. *He had seven sons and three daughters,*
3. *and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.*
4. *His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.*
5. *When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. This was Job's regular custom.*

Discussion and Questions

Based on these Scriptural accounts:

1. Who are the main characters?
2. Describe the profiles/backgrounds of these main characters.
3. List the good qualities that make Manoah and Job role models.

Key Points

1. Main Characters: Manoah and his wife, the Angel of the Lord, Job. (List only)

2. Character Profiles:

- **Manoah:** A father/head of household, an Israelite from the tribe of Dan, from Zorah.
- **Manoah's Wife:** Her name is not mentioned; she was barren.

- **Angel of the Lord:** A messenger/envoy who announced the birth to Manoah's barren wife.
- **Job:** A father/head of household from Uz; married with ten children (seven sons, three daughters); a very wealthy man.

3. Exemplary qualities of Manoah:

- **Feared and obeyed God** [Verse 20] (unlike Zechariah).
- **Loved and listened to his wife;** he respected and trusted her [Verse 8] (he continued to love and respect her even though she was childless).
- **Took responsibility for his family:** He earnestly sought guidance from God on how to raise and educate his child.
- **Remained fully involved (engaged) in family life** [Verses 8, 11-12]. (In modern contexts, few fathers know the detailed experiences of their household).

Exemplary qualities of Job:

- **Blameless and upright** [Job 1:1]
- **Feared God** [Job 1:1]
- **Shunned all evil** [Job 1:1]
- **Constantly prayed and interceded for his children** [Job 1:4, 5]
- **Did not bring disaster upon his family** through his faithfulness to God [Job 1:22]
- **Truly stood his ground as a father/head of household:** He corrected/admonished his wife [Job 2:9-10]

Practical Application

The goal is to lead fathers to set aside time for the family (praying together, playing together, listening to problems, discussing, and correcting/admonishing without making excuses for what is wrong).

Practical Examples:

- **"Sweet Friday / Eyes & Ears" Time:** Time set aside by parents to be with their children: eating together, listening to children share their highs and lows, praying together, and playing group games.
- **The Family Pulpit:** Scriptural discussions led by the father within the home.

Topic 3 : Worthy Woman

Goal:

To be a woman worthy internally and externally, based on the fear of the Lord, giving life to her family and surroundings.

Guidelines

Facilitator: A leader from the Lutheran Women's Association

Participants: Women aged 18 and older, married or single (8-12 people, with half of them being married).

Duration : 40min - 60min.

- ✓ Write the Word of God in advance on large paper so it is easy for participants to read.
- ✓ Welcome participants to their designated places. Ensure the leader can maintain eye contact with all participants.
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 - Take each question one by one.

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 - Guide the emerging ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.
 - Synthesize all ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.
 - Incorporate new ideas that strengthen the conclusion.
- ✓ Ask at least two participants to share the message that struck them most during the discussion.
 - ✓ The leader concludes the session with prayer: pray that everything discussed becomes a reality in their lives, pray for all women to be worthy/noble within the home, the community, the church, and the nation.

Biblical Reflection

Proverbs 31:10-31 (NIV)

10. A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.
11. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.
12. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.
13. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.
14. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.
15. She gets up while it is still night ; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.
16. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
17. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.
18. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.
19. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
20. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.
21. When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
22. She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
23. Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
24. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.

25. She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.
26. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
27. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.
28. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:
29. "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."
30. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
31. Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Discussion and Questions

According to this Scripture:

1. What is being discussed here?
2. Who is mentioned in this passage? (List them)
3. List the good qualities that make a woman worthy/noble.

Key Points

1. Topic: It discusses the character of a good and worthy woman within the home. (*Note : Many answers are possible ; do not list or expand upon all answers yet.*)

2. People mentioned: The woman and her household (her husband, her children) [Verses 10, 23, 28, 29].

3. Good qualities that make a woman worthy:

- **Verse 10:** She has intrinsic value (worth more than precious stones).
- **Verse 11:** A trustworthy woman (her husband relies on her).
- **Verse 12:** She takes good care of her husband.

- **Verses 13, 15, 27:** A woman who is diligent and works hard for her family (she ensures there is always food on the table).
- **Verse 14:** A woman who knows how to provide and build resources.
- **Verse 16:** She has vision and the ability to fulfill it.
- **Verse 17:** Full of courage and energy; she is not idle.
- **Verses 18, 19, 24:** She has talents and uses them for her family; she manages time well, rejoices in success, and produces high-quality work.
- **Verse 20:** She performs diaconal work (charity/helping the poor).
- **Verses 21, 22, 25:** She prepares for "rainy days," does not fear the future, and offers the best to her family.
- **Verse 23:** She brings honor to her husband (behind every man who stands tall is a woman supporting him, making him stand out before others).
- **Verse 26:** She controls her tongue and speaks with wisdom; she is not a contentious/quarrelsome woman.
- **Verses 28, 29:** She is the pride of her household (her family is happy to have her and praises her).

All these points show that she is a woman who is not "empty-handed" or lazy.

Conclusion [Verses 30–31]

In summary, the **fear of the Lord** is the foundation of a woman's worth, not outward beauty. (Women today are often preoccupied with outward appearances, using "fake" enhancements from head to toe).

It is not just about braided hair, but an **inner character** that truly makes a woman worthy (1 Peter 3:3-5). Often, once women enter a household, they stop taking care of themselves because they are too preoccupied with managing the home.

Topic 4 : Safe Pregnancy

Goal:

Couples taking full responsibility to ensure a safe pregnancy for the mother.

Guidelines

Facilitator: A leader from the Lutheran Women's Association

Participants: Four to six couples maximum (8-12 people). It is ideal for pregnant women and their husbands to attend. If necessary, it is recommended to invite a doctor or a reproductive health professional to reinforce medical advice for the attendees.

Duration : 40min - 60min

- ✓ Write the Word of God in advance on large paper so it is easy for participants to read.
- ✓ The leader selects the participants : four to six couples maximum (8-12 people).
- ✓ Welcome participants to their designated places. Ensure the leader can maintain eye contact with all participants.
- ✓ Start the session with prayer: ask for God's presence, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, mental clarity for participants and the leader, focus, and the strength for participants to persevere until the end.
- ✓ Introduction of participants (done in the form of a game).
- ✓ Presentation of the discussion goals and the agenda.
- ✓ Establishing ground rules: raise your hand before speaking, put phones on silent/vibrate, speak loudly, everyone participates, respect each other's opinions, manage time.
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 - Allow participants to express their opinions freely on each question.
 - Guide the emerging ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.

- Synthesize all ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.
 - Incorporate new ideas that strengthen the conclusion.
- ✓ Ask at least two participants (one man and one woman) to share the message that struck them most during the discussion.
 - ✓ The leader concludes the session with prayer: pray that everything discussed becomes a reality in their lives; pray for all couples to take their proper responsibilities during pregnancy. Pray specifically for the women to have a safe and healthy pregnancy.

Biblical Reflection

Judges 13: 3–4; 12–14 (NIV)

3. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, “You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son.
4. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. [...]
12. So Manoah asked him, “When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy’s life and work?”
13. The angel of the Lord answered, “Your wife must do all that I have told her.
14. She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her.”

Discussion and Questions

According to this story in the Holy Scriptures:

1. Who are the main characters?
2. What message did the angel of God give to Manoah and his wife ?
3. Who is responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy pregnancy ?

Key Points

1. Main Characters: Manoah, his wife, and the Angel of the Lord.

2. The Angel's Message : The message announced that the couple would have a child and outlined specific precautions that must be observed during the pregnancy.

It is important to note that even though the child is a gift from God, He established specific conditions and care to be followed during the pregnancy.

- Nowadays, There are **eight recommended prenatal visits** that a pregnant woman should complete at a health center to ensure her health and the health of the baby.

Required Prenatal Consultations for Pregnant Women

Consultation	Timing / Month
1st Consultation (ANC 1)	2nd or 3rd month
2nd Consultation (ANC 2)	
3rd Consultation (ANC 3)	
4th Consultation (ANC 4)	Between the 4th month and 6.5 months
5th Consultation (ANC 5)	
6th Consultation (ANC 6)	Between the 7th month and 8.5 months
7th Consultation (ANC 7)	
8th Consultation (ANC 8)	

These visits are designed to anticipate potential risks for both mother and child and to prevent any complications.

Danger Signs During Pregnancy

It is vital to recognize these warning signs immediately:

Danger Signs	Possible Illness/Condition	Risks involved
Severe headache (especially in the neck area)	High blood pressure (Hypertension)	Small baby / Fetal growth restriction
Dizziness, blurred vision, or seeing "stars"		
Ringing in the ears		
Fainting		
Confusion or delirium	Complications from high blood pressure in pregnancy	Maternal or fetal death
Swelling of the feet and face		
Shortness of breath		
Convulsions/Seizures		
Premature contractions	Risk of miscarriage or premature birth	Maternal or fetal death
Bleeding (spotting or heavy flow)		
Premature leaking of amniotic fluid		
Paleness (Anemia)		
Fever	Sepsis / Infection in the blood	Fetal death or life-threatening illness for the newborn

(The FBL leader can acts as a community health promoter).

3. Those Responsible for a Safe Pregnancy: God, the Father, and the Mother.

- **God is responsible because:**

He is the Giver of the child and the one who established the guidelines to be followed.

- **The Father (The Husband):**

- He asked the Lord for guidance on what to do during the pregnancy.
- He did not leave the responsibility solely to his wife.
- He ensured that all of God's instructions were followed to guarantee a successful pregnancy.
- He provided **peace of mind** to his wife. (In our time, many men do not support their pregnant wives, which can lead to various forms of violence).
- **Medical Note:** Sexual intimacy during pregnancy does not cause premature birth or illness for the baby if the pregnancy is progressing normally. Intimacy is actually beneficial as it strengthens the heart-bond between the couple. However, healthcare workers provide specific advice for a "Safe Pregnancy," such as protection against STIs and identifying conditions where intimacy is restricted (bleeding, leaking fluid, etc.).

"(A child desired and a life planned lead to a safe pregnancy)"

- **Manoah's Wife (The Mother) :**

- She allowed her husband to take an active role in her pregnancy (Verses 6, 7, 10).
- She carefully followed all the conditions set by God (She was not negligent).
- She was mentally and spiritually prepared for the pregnancy.
- **The couple must be curious and engaged:** As Manoah said in Verse 12: *"When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy's life and work?"*

Topic 5: Safe Delivery

Goal:

To achieve safe delivery by using health centers with trained medical staff.

Guidelines

Facilitator: A leader from the Lutheran Women's Association

Participants: Four to six couples maximum (8–12 people). It is ideal for pregnant women and their husbands to attend. If necessary, it is recommended to invite a doctor or a reproductive health professional to reinforce medical advice for the attendees.

Duration : 40min – 60min.

- ✓ Write the Word of God in advance on large paper so it is easy for participants to read.
- ✓ The leader selects the participants: four to six couples maximum (8–12 people).
- ✓ Welcome participants to their designated places. Ensure the leader can maintain eye contact with all participants.
- ✓ Start the session with prayer: ask for God's presence, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, mental clarity for participants and the leader, focus, and the strength for participants to persevere until the end.
- ✓ Introduction of participants (conducted as a game).
- ✓ Presentation of the discussion goals and the agenda.
- ✓ Establishing ground rules: raise your hand before speaking, put phones on silent/vibrate, speak loudly, everyone participates, respect each other's opinions, manage time.
- ✓ Ask one participant to read the selected Holy Scripture.
- ✓ The leader reads all the questions.
- ✓ Lead the participants through the discussion :
 - Take each question one by one.
 - Allow participants to express their opinions freely on each question.

- Guide the emerging ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.
 - Synthesize all ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.
 - Incorporate new ideas that strengthen the conclusion.
- ✓ Ask at least two participants (one man and one woman) to share the message that struck them most during the discussion.
 - ✓ The leader concludes the session with prayer: pray that everything discussed becomes a reality in their lives; pray for all couples to take their proper responsibilities before, during, and after childbirth. Pray specifically for the women to have a safe delivery.

Biblical Reflection

Psalms 71:6 (NIV)

From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you.

Exodus 1:15–17 (NIV)

15. The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah,
16. "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."
17. The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

Genesis 38:28–30 (NIV)

28. As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said, "This one came out first."
29. But when he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, "So this is how you have broken out!" And he was named Perez.
30. Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his wrist, came out. And he was named Zerah.

Discussion and Questions

1. These verses share a common theme. What is it ?
2. Who are the individuals mentioned in these passages ?
3. What were the specific roles of the people listed?
4. According to these Scriptures, what must be done to ensure a safe delivery ?

Key Points

1. People Mentioned:

- **Psalm 71:6:** Jehovah and the Psalmist.
- **Exodus 1:15–17:** The King of Egypt, Shiphrah and Puah (midwives), and the Hebrew women.
- **Genesis 38:28–30:** Tamar, the Midwife, Perez, and Zerah.

2. Their Respective Roles:

- **Psalm 71:6: * Jehovah:** Sustained the child from the womb and brought them forth safely.
 - **The Psalmist:** Praises and thanks Jehovah for His protection and for the miracle of birth.
- **Exodus 1:15–17:**
 - **The King of Egypt:** Issued a decree to the midwives to kill newborn Hebrew boys.
 - **Shiphrah and Puah:** Midwives who were ordered to kill the babies but refused out of fear of God.
 - **Hebrew Women:** Those giving birth.
- **Genesis 38:28–30:**
 - **Tamar:** The mother.
 - **The Midwife:** Facilitated the delivery and assisted in the birth process.

Note: Lives would likely have been lost if the midwives had not been present. Today, "midwives" refers to specifically trained professionals (Certified Midwives, Doctors at health centers).

4. Ensuring a Safe Delivery (Based on Scripture and Health Guidance):

- **Dependence on God:** Recognize that life comes from Him (Psalm 71:6).
- **Seek Professional Assistance:** Go to a trained health worker. They provide essential advice for safe delivery:
 - **Prevention of Early Pregnancy:** Early pregnancy can cause complications like **Obstetric Fistula** (a condition causing constant leaking of urine/feces due to prolonged labor).
 - **Postpartum Monitoring:** Immediate follow-up for the mother and baby to check health, identify urgent complications, ensure proper breastfeeding, and help the mother adjust to her changing body.
 - **Birth Spacing:** Waiting at least 2 to 3 years between pregnancies allows the mother to breastfeed effectively and recover her physical, moral, and emotional strength.
 - **The LAM Method (Lactational Amenorrhea Method):** A family planning method based on breastfeeding. It is effective for the first six months if these conditions are met:
 1. The mother's period has not returned.
 2. The baby is exclusively breastfed (day and night).
 3. The baby is less than six months old.
 - **Recovery ("The Quarantine" or "Mifana"):** The period where a woman's body returns to its normal state. This typically lasts **5 to 6 weeks**. During this time, the woman's body (which changed over 40 weeks) recovers, and she should be supported mentally, morally, and emotionally.

Topic 6: Parents Nurturing Descendants

Goal:

For parents to take responsibility for nurturing their offspring in all aspects from the womb.

Guidelines

Facilitator: A leader from the Lutheran Women's Association

Participants: Four to six couples maximum (8–12 people). Parents with young children are encouraged to attend. If necessary, a healthcare professional specializing in reproductive or pediatric health should be invited to reinforce medical advice.

Duration : 40min – 60min.

- ✓ Write the Word of God in advance on large paper so it is easy for participants to read.
- ✓ Welcome participants to their designated places. Ensure the leader can maintain eye contact with all participants.
- ✓ Start the session with prayer: ask for God's presence, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, mental clarity for participants and the leader, focus, and the strength to persevere until the end.
- ✓ Introduction of participants (conducted as a game).
- ✓ Presentation of the discussion goals and the agenda.
- ✓ Establishing ground rules: raise your hand before speaking, phones on vibrate, speak loudly, everyone participates, respect each other's opinions, manage time.
- ✓ Ask one participant to read the selected Holy Scripture.
- ✓ The leader reads all the questions.
- ✓ Lead the participants through the discussion :
 - Take each question one by one.
 - Allow participants to express their opinions freely.

- Guide ideas to align with the guidelines.
 - Synthesize ideas and incorporate new insights that strengthen the conclusion.
- ✓ Ask at least two participants (one man and one woman) to share the message that struck them most.
 - ✓ Conclude with prayer: pray that the teachings become a reality ; pray for all parents to nurture and educate their children according to God's will; pray specifically for the children to receive and live out this upbringing.

Biblical Reflection

Genesis 6:9–18 (NIV)

9. This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.
10. Noah had three sons : Shem, Ham and Japheth.
11. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence.
12. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.
13. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.
14. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.
15. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.
16. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.
17. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.
18. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.

Joshua 24:1–15 (NIV)

1. Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.
2. Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods.
3. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac,
4. and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt.
5. Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out.
6. When I brought your people out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea.
7. But they cried out to the Lord for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time.
8. I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land.
9. When Balak son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam son of Beor to put a curse on you.
10. But I would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand.
11. Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands.
12. I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow.
13. So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.’

14. Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.
15. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. **But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."**

Discussion Questions

1. What is the common theme between these passages?
2. Who are the responsible parties mentioned?
3. What forms of "nurturing" or "care" are found in these texts?

Key Points

1. Theme: What Scripture teaches about parents educating and nurturing their household according to God's will.

2. Responsible Parties : * **Genesis** : God, Noah, and his family.

- **Joshua** : Jehovah God, Joshua, and the people of Israel.

3. Forms of Care and Nurturing :

From Genesis 6 : 9–18 (Noah saved his family) :

- **Obedience to God** : He followed instructions precisely.
- **Communication** : He passed God's message to his family.
- **Conviction** : He persuaded his family to follow God's will, even when it seemed illogical to society.
- **Protection** : He removed his family from a corrupt environment and saved them from death.

In modern health, we do not wait for illness to strike before seeking treatment; instead, we prevent it through **vaccination** for both mother and child. Vaccination is a medical method that prepares the body to strengthen the immune system used to fight diseases.

➤ **Vaccination Timing**

Everyone has a specific schedule for their vaccinations. There are :

- Vaccines administered outside of pregnancy.
- Vaccines recommended during pregnancy.
- Vaccines that must continue after childbirth.

A mother's access to timely vaccination is a complete protection and guarantee for her health and that of her child.

➤ **Mandatory Vaccines**

- **For the Mother** : Tetanus Toxoid (VAT/TT).
- **For the Child** : The Immunization Calendar includes **BCG** (Tuberculosis), **Polio**, **Rotarix** (Diarrhea), **DTP-HepB-Hib** (Pentavalent), **PCV10** (Pneumonia), and **VAR** (Measles).

➤ **Pregnant women immunization schedule**

Period	Vaccine
First antenatal consultation	Vaccine 1 called VAT 1
First month after VAT 1	Booster 1 (Recall) called VAT 2
Six month after VAT 2	Booster 2 called VAT 3
One year after VAT 3	Booster 3 called VAT 4
One year after VAT 4	Booster 4 called VAT 5

➤ **Newborn and child immunization**

Recommended vaccination schedule	Vaccine
At birth	Vaccine 1
6 weeks after the previous vaccine	Vaccine 2
4 weeks after the previous vaccine	Vaccine 3
4 weeks after the previous vaccine	Vaccine 4
When the child reaches 9 months of age	Vaccine 5
When the child reaches 18 months of age	Vaccine 6

Note : Vaccines are administered in various ways: some in the arm, some in the thigh, and others as oral drops.

➤ **Spiritual Nurturing and Family Leadership**

Joshua 24:1-15: Leading by Example

- **A Solid Choice:** Joshua established a clear foundation for his family: to serve Jehovah.
- **The Head of the Household:** Joshua stood firmly in his role as the leader.
- **Prioritization:** Despite his massive responsibility leading the nation of Israel, he made his own household the priority and the model.

Proverbs 22:6: Training the Child

- Remain a role model in front of the children.
- Teach, lead, and train children through words, behavior, and work.

Deuteronomy 6 :7 : Constant Teaching

- Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Conclusion

- **Holistic Health:** All these forms of nurturing lead to health in every aspect.
- **The Power of Upbringing:** Guidance and upbringing bring physical, mental, and spiritual health to the children.
- **Interdependence:** If the health of one family member is compromised, the entire household is affected in various ways.
- **The Role of Health Services:** Health services play a vital part in enabling parents to successfully nurture the next generation.

Topic 7: One Family, One Goal, One Vision

Goal:

For the family to have unity of heart and mind to harmonize family life.

Guidelines

Facilitator: A leader from the Lutheran Women's Association

Participants : Four to six couples maximum (8–12 people). It is ideal for couples of reproductive age to participate in the discussion. If necessary, it is recommended to invite a doctor or a reproductive health professional to reinforce health advice for the attendees.

Duration : 40min – 60min

- ✓ Write the Word of God in advance on large paper so it is easy for participants to read.
- ✓ Welcome participants to their designated places. Ensure the leader can maintain eye contact with all participants.
- ✓ Start the session with prayer: ask for God's presence, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, mental clarity for the participants and the leader, focus, and the strength for participants to persevere until the end.
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 - Take each question one by one.
 - Allow participants to express their opinions freely on each question.
 - Guide the emerging ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.

- Synthesize all ideas to align with the conclusions in the guidelines.
 - Incorporate new ideas that strengthen the conclusion.
- ✓ Ask at least two participants (one man and one woman) to share the message that struck them most during the discussion.
 - ✓ The leader concludes the session with prayer: pray that everything discussed becomes a reality in their lives; pray for all couples to be of one mind under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pray specifically for children to share the same goals and vision as their parents. Pray for all households to have harmonious lives, leading to a successful generation that develops the community, the church, and the nation.

Biblical Reflection

2 Kings 4:1–7

1. The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.”
2. Elisha replied to her, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?” “Your servant has nothing there at all,” she said, “except a small jar of olive oil.”
3. Elisha said, “Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don’t ask for just a few.
4. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.”
5. She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring.
6. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another one.” But he replied, “There is not a jar left.” Then the oil stopped flowing.
7. She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.”

- 1 - What is the main message or idea conveyed by this story?
- 2 - Who are the individuals mentioned in this passage?
- 3 - What were the keys to the success of this household?
- 4 - What were the results of using those keys to success?
- 5 - What lessons have you learned from the life of this household?

Key Points

1. The main message of the story :

- A household that fears the Lord and serves Jehovah.
- A household united in heart and mind to accomplish a specific task and reach their goal.

2. People mentioned:

- Elisha, the widow and her two sons, and the community.

3. Keys to this household's success:

- The woman feared the Lord [Verse 1b].
- She was capable of identifying the problems facing her household.
- She took responsibility for her family's life when the crisis arose:
 - She immediately turned to God.
 - She spoke with the servant of God.
 - She listened to and obeyed God.
 - She knew how to involve her children in the task [Ref. Genesis 22:1-13].
 - She was a skilled manager: identifying the resources and opportunities available to solve the problem.
- She lived harmoniously with her community [Acts 10:2], [Genesis 12:5]: A family should be well managed to honor God in the community.

4. Results of using these keys:

- The problem was solved: the sons did not become slaves; the debt was paid.
- Security for the future (means of livelihood).
- The neighbor's (creditor's) problem was also resolved.

5. Lessons learned:

- When facing problems, approaching God is the primary solution.
- Jesus is far greater than any problem.
- It is also necessary to seek counsel from God's servants.
 - If biblical advice is needed, the Malagasy Lutheran Church has designated servants of God.
 - If health advice is needed, there are servants of God who are medical professionals within **SALFA**.
- Face your problems; do not run away from them.
- The unity and solidarity of the mother and her two sons guaranteed their success.
- Mutual listening is a guarantee of success (children obeying their parents).
- The importance of "setting oneself apart" or privacy [Verse 4]:
 - To experience God's presence.
 - As a protective fence to increase focus and block out distracting or discouraging voices from the outside that might shake one's faith in God's Word.

Health Perspectives and Application

- **Unified Goals** : It is vital for a household to have a common goal and work together to reach it. Every family needs to set goals.
- **Planning** : Families must analyze and identify the methods and tools required to reach those goals.
- **The Role of Children**: Children play a major role in reaching family goals. However, for children to effectively help their parents, they must be "well-prepared" physically, mentally, and spiritually.
- **Family Planning (Management)**: Parents must be able to properly manage and care for their children. Therefore, it is necessary to **plan the number of children** to ensure they can be well-raised.
 - If there are too many children, parents risk losing control, which can lead to negative impacts on the household.

- If there are too few or none, it may also impact the household's productivity and well-being.
- **Purposeful Planning** : Success is guaranteed when the number of children is planned according to the goals one wishes to achieve in life. This includes the desire to have a child, the desire to space births, or the desire to limit the number of children.
- **Seeking Guidance** : Just as the widow approached Elisha, approaching "servants of God" is necessary to reach these goals. In family planning, the servants of God who can help are the health workers at Christian health centers (here we are talking about **SALFA's professional health workers**). They can provide advice based on the **CHOICE** of the couple.

Recommendation: Advise Christian couples to visit Christian health centers to help them with their family planning and household management.