Research Briefs

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FATHER INVOLVEMENT AND ADOLESCENT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (PH.D. DISS., THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY)

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Fathers have enormous impact on their children’s development. Evidence has shown that a father’s influence extends to every aspect of a child’s life. Over the last half-century, father involvement research has evolved from counting hours spent with children to evaluations of multiple dimensions of father-child interaction. Enhanced father involvement instruments have allowed for deeper exploration of father involvement and child development. Spiritual development as it relates to father involvement, however, remains a relatively-unexplored area of research.

The purpose of this research was to assess the relationship between spiritual development of adolescents, father involvement, and father nurturance. More than 500 adolescents, ranging in age from twelve to twenty-five, were surveyed; all participants were involved in youth ministry programs in Georgia Baptist churches. Father involvement and father nurturance scores were compared to spiritual formation inventory scores. Correlation analysis was performed on data to determine any relationships between father involvement and spiritual formation in adolescents.

A significant correlation was observed between father involvement and the spiritual development of adolescents. The younger adolescents showed the highest correlations in this category. Other research has shown that adults tend to become less involved in their children’s lives as their children enter adolescence—yet involvement at this stage of development is highly significant for a child’s spiritual development.