

# CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

KEY SERMON ADVOCACY TEXT MESSAGES TO BE USED BY  
CHURCH LEADERS FOR PROMOTION OF MATERNAL,  
INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING PRACTICES





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We hope that this important document will be used for the purpose intended to contribute significantly towards the prevention of malnutrition in the Country.



## GLOSSARY

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### **Food**

Food is substance eaten, drank or taken into the body to sustain life, promote growth and helps the body to function well.

### **Nutrition**

Nutrition is a process of providing or obtaining necessary nutrients for health and growth. It can also be defined as useful substance for development, reproduction and production.

Food and Nutrition are the way we replenish, get fuel, providing energy for our bodies.

**Malnutrition** –This is a condition that occurs when an Infant/ Child consistently do not consume or absorb the rights amount and types of food and essential nutrients.

**Infant-** Refers to a Baby from birth to 12 months (1 year)

**A Young Child-** Is a Child from 12 months to 5years

**Early initiation of Breast Feeding-** Putting a new born to the mother's breast within the first hour of birth.

**Colostrum-** Is the yellow Milk that immediately comes out from the mother's breast immediately after birth and is the first immunization of life and should not be thrown away but be given to the Baby.

**Exclusive Breast Feeding-**Giving a Baby only breast milk and no other foods or drinks nor even water from birth to 6



months of age and continues breast feeding till 2 years. However medicines, minerals, supplements, drops/syrups vitamins or oral rehydration are permitted strongly on medical ground only.

**Complementary Feeding**-Giving other foods in addition to breast milk from 6 months with continued breast feeding till 2 years and beyond.

**Wasting**- Child too thin for his age (A potential death sentence that requires a drastic action/intervention)

**Stunting**-Child too short for his age (A death sentence, if not addressed after 2 years)

**Under weight** –Weighing less than the normal or expected weight. (Low weight for age)

**Timely**- Giving locally available foods beginning at 6months added to the breast milk

**Safe**- Complementary foods free from germs, not spoilt or rotten prepared with clean water in clean utensils and clean environment

**Adequate**-Feeding child 3-5times daily with combined variety of nutrients-rich foods from energy food group, plant food group, animal food group and fruits and vegetable food group.

Increasing the micronutrient- vitamin & mineral content of the foods with use of fortified oil, salt, sugar, vegetable oil, biofortified foods like Orange flesh sweet potatoes, vitamin K maize, sorghum, cassava, MNP. These foods can be bought or accessed from Health facility to reduce and





prevent anaemia (blood loss), weak immune system, swollen neck (Goitre), tiredness, poor appetite, poor vision (night blindness), ricket (bowleg) and growth failure).

**Properly fed**-Encourage child to eat, give help with lots of patience, not force-feeding; increasing amounts as child grows older.





## SECTION ONE

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### 1.0 PURPOSE AND TARGET OF SERMON GUIDE

#### 1.1 Purpose of the sermon guide

This guide is to be employed to mobilize the community through Advocacy for Social Behavioral Change. It is designed to address Food and Nutrition issues affecting human life cycle with a view to providing a road map to integrate advocacy and strategic awareness creation that will remove all barriers militating against good nutrition uptake.

#### 1.2 Who should use this guide?

This sermon guide is to be used by relevant religious leaders – (Bishops, Priests, Pastors and other Christian Leaders). The document can be used during sermons and other appropriate time and places like Sunday school, marriage counselling, church group meetings etc.

#### 1.3 The Sermon Guide

Religion throughout the World is a significant platform in human capital development. Evidence suggests that behavioral change interventions are more successful with the active participation of **Religious Leadership** as critical Community gatekeepers, influencers and change agents hence providing a platform for implementing malnutrition preventive initiatives.

Procreation of human species is part of divine plan. Infants and Young Children are therefore a trust in our custody and we are under duty and obligations to take care of them. In



accordance with Christian teachings, we have to ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to protect them from any harm so as to preserve the trust bestowed on us by Almighty God.

The issue of malnutrition which is gaining prominence globally knows no religious, tribal, regional, political or any affiliations hence the need for a strategic spiritual message to address issues regarding Infants and Young Children feeding practices as part of Christian religious routine activities. The leaders are to provide the needed guidance and information to integrate advocacy, mobilization and awareness creation into their sermons in order to eradicate misconceptions, myths, socio-cultural beliefs, inaccurate information and other practices that are harmful to adequate nutritional uptake.

Christian Leaders hold position of trust and responsibility and also possess significant power and control in influencing behavioral change especially in promoting and shaping moral values that impact positively on the lives of their congregants in terms of followership which is a veritable platform of molding opinion of large numbers.

The ultimate goal of this key sermon guide is to provide information from biblical context at community level that will be used by Christian leaders such as Bishops, Reverends, Pastors and other Church leaders. This is to provide strategic information to members of the Community to empower them acquire skills and knowledge that will not only empower them dispel all rumors, misconceptions, myths, socio-cultural beliefs etc. that serves as a major road



block to good nutrition but will also enable them take positive decisions on correct information that will prevent malnutrition.





## SECTION TWO

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### 2.0 CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES ON HEALTH AND NUTRITION

#### 2.1 History of Procreation

Procreation and nutrition are divine plan of God from creation.

***"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. (Genesis 1:28-29).***

It should be noted that we will give account of how we take care of our children before God. It is important to note that nutrition begins with man's creation.

***"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward." (Ps.127:3ff).***

***"Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." (Gen2:15-16)***



***"He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created". (Genesis 5:2)***

Procreation of the human species is therefore part of the divine plan. Mother, Infant and Children are special gifts from Almighty God, they are trust in our custody.

***"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. (Psalm 127:3)."***

The Bible has not left out specific rules in respect of Infant and Young Child, and thus providing good rearing, upbringing and care for the child especially feeding.

The Bible approaches infant and child rights holistically (theological, medical psychological, educational, economical and sociological perspectives) and prescribed rules for prevention of harm.

***"And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4).***

***"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)***

As trustees we must take care of them (mother and child) from Pregnancy/infancy, adolescents to adulthood by implementing the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, for this is our godly mandate.



**“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”. (1Tim 5:8)**

## **2.2 History of Food and Nutrition**

Food is substance eaten, drank or taken into the body to sustain life, promote growth and helps the body to function well.

Nutrition is a process of providing or obtaining necessary nutrients for health and growth. It can also be defined as useful substance for development, reproduction and production. Food and Nutrition are the way we replenish and provide energy for our bodies.

God in his divine wisdom has provided adequately for man in creation what he needs to feed himself for the sustenance of the body and soul to achieve physical and mental well-being, for only with buoyant health can man fulfill his purpose on earth.

***“ Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”***  
**(Gen.2:15-17)**



## 2.3 Nutrition is a Divine Commodity

- Nutrition is the foundation for human development and investing in nutrition will contribute to achieving the goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.
- Good nutrition in a child's early years especially the first **1000** days of life (From conception to when child is two years of age) is linked to their health, school performance and productivity in later years.
- Without proper nutrition, the ability of a child to fight infections is compromised as malnutrition and infections affect each other especially in children and women.
- Important for human survival, growth, brain and cognitive development, elimination of hunger and maintenance of life.
- Provide support for immune system, manage opportunistic infections, optimise the response to medical treatment,
- Sustenance of healthy level of physical and mental activity, productivity, prevention of sickness and enhancing recovery.
- It also builds a productive society and improves quality of lives.

## 2.3 Effects of malnutrition on individual productivity, Health, and Mortality

### 1. Individual

- (a) Stunting leads to cognitive impairment and is associated with reduced school performance





(b) Stunted girl is more likely to give birth to a stunted child perpetuating the cycle of inter-generational impact.

## 2. Health and Mortality

(a) 45% of all deaths under 5 children are linked to malnutrition

Wasted children are 3-11 times more likely to die, than non-wasted children due to malnutrition

(b) Stunted children are 2-5 times more likely to die, than non-stunted children because of malnutrition

(c) Stunted children are more likely to develop chronic diseases in adulthood.

## 2.5 Million Children are affected by wasting in Nigeria

Over 10 million children affected by stunting in Nigeria

Note that Northern Nigeria States are more affected with wasting and stunting.

Source; UNICEF Paper presentation during Traditional and Religious Leaders Meeting Kaduna (24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November, 2017)

33.2% of Children under 5 are stunted

3.2% of Children under 5 are wasted



16.9% of children under 5 are under weighted (too thin for their age)

Source: NNHS 2018

## **2.4 Christian principles on Nutrition**

God is our ultimate healer and protector and has given us the resources to make helpful medicines and granted His children the skills and drive to become healers.

***"and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you." (Exodus.15:26)***

However, we must remember that God uses people as tools to do His good work. He has provided us with plants and animals for us to be adequately nourished. He has given His children the skills and desire to become knowledgeable and educated caregivers. In His wisdom, He has enabled us to build facilities where precious lives of human beings can be saved.

The issues of inadequate nutritional practices including care leads to sicknesses and diseases that will need medical attention.

***"When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who***



***are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Mark 2:17).***

***“Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.” (Ezekiel 47:12)***

Man is responsible for his own wellbeing, therefore, the need for intake of adequate nutritious foods.

***“ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church:” (Ephesians.5:29).***

***“ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians.6:19)***

***“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” (3 John 2)***

**“And one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?” (James 2:16)**



*"So, when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." (John 6:12)*

## **2.5 Human Development and Prevention of Harm to the body**

The Holy Scriptures approaches issue of human development holistically and prescribed rules of prevention of harm to the body. There exists a general Principle of Christian faith called "**Prevention of harm**" to any human being which extends to other creatures.





## SECTION THREE

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### 3.0 SAFE MOTHER HOOD (MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH)

#### 3.1 Introduction

Safe motherhood means ensuring that all women have access to the information and services they need to go through safely pregnancy and childbirth.

*"And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them". (Exodus 1:19)*

*"Because he did not kill me from the womb, that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb always enlarged with me." (Jeremiah.20:17),*

**" But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger. O when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb ". (Genesis 25:22-24)**



### 3.2 Pregnancy

Pregnancy and Childbirth is an expected joyous moment to the couple and families at large though the women may face some challenges.

***"To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)***

***"A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world." (John 16: 21)***

One hundred and forty-five thousand women in Nigeria die daily due to pregnancy related complications, especially anemia in pregnancy

According to 2018 NDHS, 1 in every 34 women die because of pregnancy-childbirth causes in Nigeria which is about 145 Women that dies daily.

This is due to delays in seeking health care, delays in reaching health facilities and poor health services in facilities. Issues regarding poverty, poor emergency obstetric services, and fatalistic beliefs that contributed to a high incidence of infectious diseases, postpartum Haemorrhage, hypertensive disorders, unsafe abortions, and prolonged labour. According to Mahmoud Fathalla, former Dean of the Medical School of Asyut University in



Cairo, Egypt. "Women are not dying because of diseases we cannot treat. They are actually dying because society is yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving".

The scripture therefore, admonishes the society to care for one another.

***"And you shall have goats' milk enough for your food, for the food of your household, and for the maintenance for your maidens." (Prov.27:23)***

***" Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness" (John 3:11)***

### **3.3 Nutrition in Pregnancy**

Nutrition is very important in pregnancy for the health of the mother and child. Throughout the pregnancy, the mother is expected to take one tablet of iron folic acid daily after every evening meal.

The Bible contains admonition for families:

***"She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe." (Judges 13:14,)***

***"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the***



***grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)***

***“Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” (1 Timothy 2:15)***

Therefore, adequate nutrition is necessary for a child to grow properly which begins from pre-pregnancy (adolescents), during pregnancy and breastfeeding period.

Adequate nutrient intake involves:

- A Pregnant Mother needs to eat variety of nutrients - rich foods of animal and plant food groups, energy giving food as well as fruits and vegetables food group and also follow the necessary health protocols for the good of herself and proper growth of her Child.
- Attending Antenatal clinic (routine visit to health facilities by pregnant women) at least 8 times during pregnancy and deliver at appropriate health facilities, will go a long way in saving the lives of Women and Babies from death

### **3.4 Right of the Foetus (unborn infant)**

After conception the rights of the infant begins, the foetus requires high proteins, minerals and other nutrients through the Mother. The family have the responsibility to provide good food for the mother through which she passes the nutrient to the foetus in her.





***"She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe." (Judges 13:14)***

***"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8)***

***"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; Before you were born, I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5)***

### **3.5 During Delivery**

All efforts should be made to ensure that the pregnant mother is supported to deliver a live healthy Baby at an appropriate health facility (Clinic or hospital) with the help of qualified trained personnel to ensure that the life of the mother and baby are safe.

For the safety of mother and foetus, pregnant women should be taken to a functional health facility, with skilled assistance. The necessary delivery materials must be provided by the family.

***"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).***



*And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them (Ex.1:19)*

### **3.6 Post Delivery**

Postnatal **delivery** is the **care** given to the mother and her newborn baby immediately **after birth** to the first six weeks of life.

Attention should be focused on the health of the mother and Baby which include:

- Ensure early initiation of Exclusive Breastfeeding' within 1 hour of birth
- The yellow colostrum (the first form of milk produced by the human immediately following delivery of newborn) is given to the child and not thrown away.
- Good nutrition for the mother and other basic needs are maintained.
- Appropriate immunizations/Vaccinations of the Baby.
- Weight measuring and other measures are carried out periodically in the interest of the Mother, Baby and the Society.

*"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so."(Proverb 3:27)*

*"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."(1Peter 3:7)*



## SECTION FOUR

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### 4.0 INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING

#### 4.1 Introduction

Every Infant and Child has the right to good nutrition

Undernutrition is associated with 1 in 2 child death

About 1:5 Infants 0-6 months are exclusively breastfed and few children receive nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods.

Breastmilk is generally accepted as the **best food for infants and Young Children”**

Early Initiation starts within one hour of birth (First food of life from God) followed by Exclusive Breast Feeding from 0-6 months and give complementary after 6 months and **Continue Breast Feeding** till the child is 2 years and beyond

#### 4.2 Exclusive Breastfeeding

Exclusive breastfeeding means that the infant receives only breast milk in the first six months of life. No other liquids or solids are given – not even water – with the exception of oral rehydration solution, or drops/syrups of vitamins, minerals or medicines when prescribed by medical personnel.



The yellow Milk (Colostrum) should not be thrown away but be given to the Baby because it is the first immunization and food of life.

**Key sermon guide:**

Exclusive Breast Feeding for the first six months of life without anything including water is the most cost-effective, preventive, health promotive measures and most appropriate important nutrition for healthy survival of Infants.

***"But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever. So Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His word." Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him." (1Samuel 1:22-23)***

***"But you are He who took me out of the womb; you made me trust while on My mother's breasts" (Psalm 22:9)***

***"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget." (Isaiah 49:15)***

***"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby." (1Peter 2:2)***



### 4.3 Benefits of Breastfeeding

- The first two years of a child's life are the most important for establishing healthy development of the brain
- Breast feeding improves brain development, school attendance and is associated with higher income in adult life
- Improving child development and reducing health costs through breastfeeding results in economic gains for individual families as well as at the National level

### 4.4 Challenges in Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding can come with some difficulties like:

- Blockage of flow of milk
- Sore in the nipples

### To solve the above Challenges

- Place one warm towel on the nipples for relief
- Soften breast by expressing
- In the case of sore, smear breastmilk on affected area and allow to air-dry. If problem persist consult a health worker

### 4.5 Complementary Feeding

After six months all babies require appropriate complementary foods while breastfeeding continues for up to two years of age and beyond. These complementary foods should be **timely, adequate, and safe** and the child **properly fed** with locally available nutritious food like potatoes, beans, rice, pap (made of maize, millet, guinea,



corn, soyabeans, and groundnut), soft porridge, watermelon, eggs, carrot, orange etc.

***"And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so." (Genesis 1:29-30.)***

***"I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;" (1corinthians3:2)***

***"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow thereby." (1peter 2:2)***





## SECTION FIVE

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### 5.0 PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE (WATER AND SANITATION HYGIENE- WASH)

#### 5.1 Introduction

Biblically, general hygiene is encouraged in all sphere of life including worship.

Poor personal and environmental hygiene can affect a child's nutritional status. Hence, WASH are critical measures in preventing infant and Childhood sickness especially vomiting, diarrhea, malaria, intestinal parasites and other sicknesses.

#### **Regular hand washing with soap; before and after:**

- Preparing food and cooking
- Eating or feeding a child.
- Cleaning Child's bottom
- Using toilet/defecation.
- After getting in touch with other dirty items

The above measures will go a long way in reducing Infant/Child sicknesses.

***If there is any man among you who becomes unclean by some occurrence in the night, then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp. But it shall be, when evening comes, that he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.”  
(Deuteronomy23:10-11)***



***"But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face," (Matthew.6:17)***

***"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. (Exodus19:10)***

***"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." (Ezekiel 36:25)***

## **5.2 Personal and Domestic Cleanliness**

God is not only interested in our spiritual cleanliness but also our personal and domestic cleanliness in order to ensure a healthy life. There is this general saying that **"cleanliness is next to Godliness"** therefore, it is important for us to live a hygienic life. This provides protection from many diseases and prevents the spread of infections.

***"When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches" (Mark 7:4)***

***"Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also." (Matthew23:26)***





***"And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may come into the camp." (Numbers 31:24)***

***"And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments." (Genesis35:2)***

### **5.3 Water and Food Hygiene**

Water is an essential component of life and mentioned from creation.

***"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." (Genesis1:2)***

Contaminated water and food are sources of transmitting diseases and Infections.

***"And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean." (Lev.15:13)***

***"Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse" (Deuteronomy23:12-13)***



**"When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches" (Mark 7:4)**

### **5.4 Environmental Hygiene**

***"Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement (Deuteronomy 23:12-13)***





## SECTION SIX

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### 6.0 NEGLIGENCE TO CATER FOR FAMILY (INFANT/CHILD AND MOTHER)

It is obligatory for parents to provide for the feeding of their family and other basic care. Therefore it is a grave sin for one to neglect a person to whom one is responsible to sustain.

***"Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis2:24)***

***"So, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church." (Ephesians5:28)"***

***"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise." (Luke 6:31)***

***"But if any provide not for his own and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel". (1Timothy 5:8)***

#### 6.1 Feeding the poor

Since all fingers are not equal God wants the rich to help the poor to improve their living condition.



***"The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor". (Prov.22:9)***

***"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done". (Prov.19:17)***

***"If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need..." (Deu.15:7-8/11)***

***"If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?" (1John 3:17)***

## SECTION SEVEN

### 7.0 RIGHTS OF THE GIRL-CHILD AND WOMEN

#### 7.1 Introduction

The Bible teaches that men and women are equal before God therefore, women and girls' right should be respected and protected.

The Bible commands that human life especially the vulnerable groups (women, children & physically challenged) should be empowered with care, dignity, respect and support to ensure healthy living and existence to full potential.

#### 7.2 Right to Life

***"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise". (Gal.3:28-29)***

***"What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and give their father's inheritance to them. "Say to the Israelites, 'If a man dies and leaves no son, give his inheritance to his daughter. If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, give his***



***inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to have the force of law for the Israelites, as the Lord commanded Moses.' "***  
***(Number 27:7-11).***

### **7.3 Right to Education**

An educated woman will contribute positively to herself, her faith and society at large.

**"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me;" (Hosea 4:6)**

***"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."*** (Prov.22:6)

***"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid."*** (Proverb 12:1)

### **7.4 Right to Economic Empowerment**

In Biblical accounts, there are records of women who were wealthy and enterprising hence, women need to be empowered economically.

***A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves. "So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have***



*in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil. "Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few.*

*4 And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones. "So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out.*

*6Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel. "And he said to her, "There is not another vessel." So the oil ceased. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest." (2kings4:1-7)*

*"A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard "(prov.31:10ff)*



***"Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means." (Luke8:3)***

***"One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (Acts16:14)***

## **7.5 Right to Protection**

The sanctity of life is sacrosanct to human existence. Therefore, the right to protection of woman and child must be ensured.

***"You shall not murder "(EX.20:13)***

***"Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind." (Genesis9:6)***

***"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. "(Hebrew11:23)***





## CONCLUSION

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The bible enjoined us to follow that which is good (Phil.4:8) and also promises to bless those who do right.

*“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*  
**(Philippians4:8)**

**“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”** (Luke6:38)

God also warns that there will be consequence for everyone who is disobedient

**But it shall come to pass, if you will not listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day; that all these curses shall come on you, and overtake you:”** (Deuteronomy 28:15ff)

**NOTE: ALL THE BIBLE VERSES USED WERE QUOTED FROM NEW KING JAMES VERSION (NKJV).**



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