Restoring communication in problematic interpersonal relationships in the family system. A Pastoral study

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ABSTRACT

In this study the interpersonal relationships and especially problematic communication within the family context is of paramount concern. The focus on communication, specifically in the family system, with a view to Biblically restoring communication in problematic interpersonal relationships gives the present study validity and value; this is especially true in the context of family systems in South Africa. The family system in South Africa is under pressure and the pastoral care giver is, subsequently, also under pressure to provide accurate counselling and intercession when needed to the family as a whole. This study aims to satisfy that need in focusing on restoring communication in problematic interpersonal relationships in the family system from a Bible-centred (Christian) perspective.

The areas that the researcher investigated centred on communication in problematic interpersonal family relationships and the way in which communication problems in a particular family system may contribute to the potential problems that the family as a unit may have to cope with. The researcher worked with the hypothesis that problematic communication in interfamilial relationships may severely impede the family system in functioning as an allied unit against the pressures of life (for instance financial challenges, work stress). If family communication patterns were healthy or at least functional, the hypothesis is that all other problems that a family might face could be handled more easily by a family as an allied unit. The research question of this study is: How can families, with problematic interpersonal familial relationships, be counselled from a Biblical perspective with the primary objective of restoring communication in the family system? Can effective Bible-centred counselling guidelines be set down and developed from a study of family systems as depicted in Scripture, the human sciences and an empirical study in order to restore communication in problematic interpersonal relationships in the family system?

This study shows that problematic communication in interfamilial relationships does impede the family system from functioning effectively. Interpersonal relationships in the family system is often complex and communication is only one element present in those relationships which can have a detrimental effect on good family relationships if communication is strained. The overarching research aim of the study was to obtain, develop and put forth Bible-centered praxis-theoretical guidelines on restoring communication in family systems caught up in problematic interpersonal relationships. The conclusion of this study is that families with problematic interpersonal familial relationships can be effectively counselled from a Biblical perspective with the aid of material from the human sciences with the primary objective of restoring communication in the family system.

KEY WORDS

family system, problematic interpersonal relationships, communication, pastoral study.
OPSOMMING

In hierdie studie is die interpersoonlike verhoudings en meer spesifiek problematiiese kommunikasie binne die familiekonteks die belangrikste oorweging. Die fokus op kommunikasie, spesifiek in die familiesisteem, met die oog om skriftuurlik kommunikasie te herstel in problematiese interpersoonlike verhoudings, gee die studie geldigheid en waarde; dit is veral akkuraat binne die konteks van familiesisteme in Suid-Afrika. Die familiesisteem in Suid-Afrika is onder druk en die pastorale hulpverlener is ook, gevolglik, onder druk om aan die familie akkurate berading en intersessie, wanneer nodig, aan die familie in sy geheel te bied. Hierdie studie het dit as oogmerk om daardie behoefte te vervul deur te fokus op die herstel van kommunikasie in problematies interpersoonlike verhoudings in die familiesisteem vanuit 'n skrifgesentreerde (Christelike) perspektief.

Die areas wat die navorser ondersoek het, het gesentreer rondom kommunikasie in problematiese interpersoonlike familieverhoudings en die wyse waarop kommunikasie probleme in 'n spesifieke familiesisteem kan bydra tot die moontlike probleme wat die familie, as 'n eenheid, dalk sal moet hanteer. Die navorser het met die hipotese gewerk dat problematiese kommunikasie in interpersoonlike familieverhoudings die funksionering van die familie as 'n verenigde front teen die druk van die lewe (byvoorbeeld finansiële uitdagings en werknemers) sterk mag belemmer. Indien familiekommunikasie patrone gesond of immers funksioneel is, is die hipotese dat alle ander probleme wat 'n familie mag trotseer, makliker hanteer kan word deur 'n familie wat as 'n eenheid funksioneer. Die navorsingsvraag van die studie is: Hoe kan families met problematiese interpersoonlike familieverhoudings, beraad word vanuit 'n Bybelse perspektief met die primêre doel om kommunikasie in die familie sisteem te herstel? Kan effektiewe Skrifgesentreerde beradingsriglyne neergeleg en ontwikkel word van 'n studie van familiesisteme soos aangedui in die Skrif, die sekulêre menswetenskappe en 'n empiriese studie ten einde kommunikasie in problematiese interpersoonlike verhoudings in die familiesisteem te herstel?

Die studie wys dat problematiese kommunikasie in interpersoonlike familieverhoudings wel die familiesisteem telemmer om effektief te funksioneer. Interpersoonlike verhoudings in die familie is baie keer kompleks en kommunikasie is slegs een element teenwoordig in daardie verhoudings wat 'n negatiewe effek op goeie familie verhoudings kan hê indien kommunikasie vertroebeld is. Die oorhoofse navorsingsdoel van die studie was om Skrifgesentreerde praktyk-teoretiese riglyne te bekom, te ontwikkel en voor te stel om kommunikasie in familiesisteme wat vasgevang is in problematiese interpersoonlike verhoudings, te herstel. Die gevolgtrekking van hierdie studie is dat families met problematiese interpersoonlike familieverhoudings wel effektief beraad kan word vanuit 'n Bybelse perspektief met hulp van die sekulêre menswetenskappe met die primêre doel om kommunikasie in die familie sisteem te herstel.

SLEUTELWOORDE
familiesisteem, problematies interpersoonlike verhoudings, kommunikasie, pastorale studie.
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