

# Called to Lead: An Inspiring Father's Day Message

On the evening of June 28, 2026, the DMF gathered on Zoom to celebrate Father's Day. Before the event, DMF fathers received maroon neckties by mail, specially made for the occasion and embroidered with the DMF symbol and the words "DMF Father." Some fathers wore their ties during the celebration.

The program began with an opening prayer by Sis. Kebbeh Clark. In her welcome remarks, Sis. Wilma Mcborough explained the purpose of the gathering. Sis. Johnette Gongloe then beautifully sang the hymn "Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy." Sis. Brenda Davis read Proverbs 1:7-9, after which Vice President Brenda Bedell presented a Father's Day tribute written by Mrs. Yei Wuor, one of the Fellowship's elders. Sis. Tessa Paye-Zulu then introduced the speaker, Rev. Henry Dolopei, pastor of Brooklyn UMC in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and an active DMF member.

Rev. Dolopei's message was the highlight of the occasion. Speaking from Proverbs 1:8 on the topic "A Godly Father's Role and Influence in the Marriage and Family Unit," he reflected on the verse, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." He reminded the gathering that the home is the first school where children learn wisdom, life lessons, and the fear of the Lord.

Rev. Dolopei described seven characteristics and roles of a godly father, illustrating each with meaningful examples. First, a godly father gives instruction. Defining instruction as "teaching, guidance, correction, and wisdom," he explained that while providing for a family's physical needs is important, a father must also teach his children how to live, respect others, work hard, tell the truth, pray, forgive, handle disappointment, and make wise choices. This instruction is especially important because many children are being shaped by the wrong voices, including social media, the Internet, friends, and culture. A godly father's instruction should include speaking life and blessing over his children. Because children learn from both what they hear and what they see, a godly father should model honesty and integrity, even asking his children for forgiveness when he is wrong.

Another role of a godly father is to honor his wife and the mother of the home. Rev. Dolopei said that "one of the greatest gifts a father can give his children is to love and respect their mother," because children learn about marriage and family life by

watching their parents. A son learns how to treat women by observing how his father treats his mother, and a daughter learns what kind of love and respect to expect by watching that same example. A godly father demonstrates this through the way he speaks to his family, showing patience and kindness even after a difficult day at work.

Leading his family spiritually is a third role of a godly father, according to Rev. Dolopei. This spiritual leadership is practiced at home and beyond, every day of the week, as a father lives out his faith during difficult times. He added that a father who prays with his children teaches them that “when life becomes difficult, we do not run away from God. We run to God.”

In summarizing the remaining roles and traits of a godly father, Rev. Dolopei identified providing more than financial support, disciplining with love, building family unity, and leaving a legacy of love. A father’s lasting impact will not come from material things, but from the emotional and spiritual support he gives through his presence and affirming words. Loving discipline does not embarrass, destroy, or provoke children; it guides them through boundaries, structure, and correction. A godly father also preserves family unity by handling disagreements and stressful challenges with grace. His lasting legacy is one of “faith, wisdom, integrity, discipline, courage, humility, and love.”

Rev. Dolopei closed his sermon by addressing families and acknowledging the mixed emotions Father’s Day can bring. He encouraged the gathering to look to God as “a Father to the fatherless,” who “can heal wounds, restore hearts, and raise up spiritual fathers and mentors.” He concluded by celebrating fathers and challenging them to embrace their “powerful role in the marriage and family unit” as men called to instruct, love, protect, provide, guide, discipline, serve, and lead spiritually.

After the message, program committee chair Sis. Florence Fonderson thanked Rev. Dolopei for his inspirational words. Sis. Janice Jackson prayed for all fathers, and the DMF president gave announcements. Sis. Harriet M. Badio offered the vote of thanks, and Sis. Viola Montgomery closed the celebration with prayer.

