

Good morning everyone and Happy Father's Day to all of you Fathers and Father-figures here today. I would like to start with a prayer
Psalm 19 – 4

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in they sight Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen

The first Father's Day was celebrated in the United States in 1910. A girl named Sonor Smart wanted to show honor to her father, who was an army veteran of the Civil War. He had five children and when his wife died, they were all still really small. He brought them all up by himself. She contacted the government and was granted permission to have a special day just for fathers. Canada adopted this holiday roughly two years later. We have celebrated this wonderful holiday ever since.

I've entitled my Father's Day message – Who knocked a hole in the roof?

This message is inspired by an article in a book called "Think on these Things" by John Maxwell. He relates the story of four men, which was just read about in Mark 2 by Gail. What kind of a person would knock a hole in a roof? These men, out of concern for their crippled friend, went to great lengths to take him to Jesus for healing.

The author lists four characteristics of these men which I feel are found, or could be found in Fathers. (pause)

Number 1: The men were concerned about others, even if it was inconvenient. Can you imagine how hard it was to climb up onto the top of a roof carrying a man on a stretcher and peel back the roof? They were not selfish. Fathers often display this trait. My father took in one of his brother's children to live with us for a few months because his wife was expecting another child and they already had eight children. They only lived up the street from us, so she got to see her family practically every day. She was almost 5 and I was 4. She

was supposed to stay for 6 months. She stayed with us for 4 years. My father treated us as if we were both his daughters. If I got a dress in pink, she got the same one in blue. We were treated exactly the same and I thought of her as my sister. Then her family decided to move away and she, of course, went with them. My Dad never took one penny for her care in all that time and treated her like another daughter. He was heartbroken when she left, as were we all. Many years later, after I was married with children, my Father had an apt. in our basement. My sister-in-law and her little daughter were coming for a visit. As soon as my Father heard this he said. "What will the poor child play with as there are only boys toys in this house. Take me to Sears. The next day he bought a doll and a tea set for her to play with while visiting with us and of course, she could take it home with her. My Father had a real soft spot for children. One Christmas we bought a guitar for our oldest son and kept it at my Father's so he wouldn't find it before Christmas. Years later Jeremy told me that Papa told him not to worry about the guitar and that he would get it. That was my Dad in a nutshell.

Number 2: These men possessed the spirit of cooperation. No one tried to do the task on their own. They realized that by working together they had a better chance of getting their friend to Jesus. When I look out at the men in this church, the fathers and father-like individuals, I see men who know how to pull together to make things happen, like the pancake breakfast at Easter and doing odd jobs around the church, like fixing the back stairs. Involving your children in chores around the house or yard is a wonderful way to show how cooperation eases the load and produces victory.

My husband was a real handy man, but only one of his sons got that gift from him. They both always wanted to help their Father and he would let them. Our oldest, Jeremy, was not much of a handy man. Our son, Christopher, however, was just like his Dad. Gerry would praise our son Christopher for being such a good helper and even doing things Gerry didn't ask for. Then he would tell our son Jeremy

that he was the perfect “helper” because he always did exactly what was asked of him, no more, no less. Being a good /Father he made sure that each of his children felt appreciated and it also gave them confidence. So in the end they both thought they did a wonderful job as helpers. This helps children to learn that it is good to be helpful.

Number 3: The four men knew that the only answer to their friend’s problem was Jesus. Mos of us find it difficult to ask for help, and I’ve noticed that men really struggle with this characteristic. Fathers encourage their children to ask for ehlp if they don’t know what to do. My husband would go around the house for days thinking about how to deal with something and if I would ask him about it, he would say that he and “the fella upstairs” were discussing the best thing to do. Fathers if you don’t know what to do, you can ask your Father, your Heavenly Father. God’s prayer line is always open.

Number 4: These men had their priorities straight. They had a job to do that was more important than being ridiculed by the crowd gathered to see Jesus. Think of Noah, he didn’t back down when people laughed at him. Life can get so busy, and time with our families and friends can sometimes be dropped to the bottom of our “to do” list. Becoming a father doesn’t come with a set of instructions. A Christian Dad helps his kids grow, not only outwardly, but inwardly as well, preparing them to be strong, wise and ready for whatever life brings. The four men in this lesson from Mark were very much aware of their Heavenly Father and knew just what Jesus was able to do. In order to help their friend, they did not think about themselves. They formed a plan and by working together they made every effort to bring their friend to Jesus. Fathers and Father-figures, look at your lists. Are there things to change? Are their things to keep? Are there things to throw away? Are you willing to knock holes in a roof?