

Priorities

- Paul recognized that marriage implies a division of attention, but that either choice is acceptable. (1 Corinthians 7:32 – 35)
- The family of the faithful is equally important as physical family
 - Matthew 12:46 – 50 "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?...Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:31 – 35, Luke 8:19 – 21)
 - Strong statements about the priority of Jesus over family
 - Matthew 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mothers or children or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life." (Mark 10:29 – 30, Luke 18:29 – 30)
 - Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."
- Faith will cause family problems
 - Luke 21:16 "You will be betrayed by even parents and brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death."
 - Luke 12:53 "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." (Matthew 10:35 – 36)
 - Mark 13:12 "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death." (Matthew 10:21)
- God expects the faithful to be responsible to and for their relatives
 - Honor your father and your mother (Matthew 19:19, Mark 7:10, Mark 10:19, Luke 18:20, Ephesians 6:2)
 - Obey parents (Colossians 3:20)
 - Disobedience to parents is in two "bad lists" (Romans 1:30, 2 Timothy 3:2)
 - But men leave parents when they marry (Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7, Ephesians 5:31)
 - Faithful people take care of their physical families; the church as a group takes care of the faithful without physical families. (1 Timothy 5:3 – 16)
 - Jesus took care of His mother. (John 19:25 – 27)
 - But you say, "Whoever says to his father and mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God,' then he need not honor his father." Thus you have made the commandment of God to no effect by your tradition. (Matthew 15:3 – 6, Mark 7:10 – 13)
- God uses earthly family relationships to illustrate a bigger picture
 - Treat elderly church women as mothers, younger church women as sisters. (1 Timothy 5:2)
 - Church women are called sisters (Romans 16:1, 1 Corinthians 7:15, James 2:15, 2 John 13)
 - Church men are called brothers (more than 50 times)
 - Marriage between two Christians is to be an illustration of the relationship between Jesus and the church (Ephesians 5:23 – 33, 1 Peter 3:7)
 - "Parents lay up for their children" illustrates that teachers should not expect learners to support them (2 Corinthians 12:14)
 - The family includes the faithful: angels, physically dead, physically living (Hebrews 12:22 – 23)

Conclusions:

- Choices are inevitable. Physical family (including work) and spiritual family are not in competition.
- If one must choose one above the other, something went wrong.
- God expects us to think. No formula is given.
- Pray for wisdom. Make a choice. Try it. If it's not working, adjust.