

HOLIDAY SEASON: A TIME TO NURTURE, NOT TO JUST REST

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

The school holiday season is often welcomed with excitement and relief. For students, it marks the end of a demanding academic term. For parents and teachers, it offers a welcome pause from the routines of school life. Yet, beyond the rest and recreation lies a much greater opportunity. Holidays are not simply a break from learning; they are a sacred season for nurturing lives, strengthening families, and shaping the character of the next generation. The lessons children learn during these weeks can influence them long after the holidays have ended.

Education is never confined to the four walls of a classroom. The home remains the child's first school, parents and guardians are the first teachers, and the church is God's appointed partner in raising boys and girls who will grow into responsible, compassionate, and God-fearing adults.

During the holidays, these three institutions have a unique opportunity to work together in providing the guidance, encouragement, and support that young people need.

For parents, the holiday season offers a priceless opportunity to reconnect with their children. The pressures of work and school often leave little room for meaningful conversations during the school term.

Holidays restore that opportunity. They create space to listen to children's dreams, understand their struggles, celebrate their achievements, and gently guide them through life's challenges. Children do not merely need financial provision; they long for emotional presence, spiritual direction, and genuine affection. The greatest gift a parent can give is not expensive possessions but quality time, wise counsel, and unconditional love.

The home should become a place where faith is lived every day. Family worship, shared meals, prayer, and open conversations about God's Word help children understand that Christianity is not only practiced in church but also experienced at home. Parents teach far more through their example than through their instructions. Children carefully observe how adults speak, solve problems, handle disappointment, and treat others. Character is often caught before it is taught. A home filled with kindness, forgiveness, honesty, and respect becomes fertile ground for raising young men and women of integrity.

Guardians also carry an important responsibility during this season. Whether caring for relatives, grandchildren, or other young people, they are entrusted with protecting lives and nurturing potential. Holidays should not become seasons of idleness or exposure to harmful influences. Instead, they should provide opportunities for children to learn practical life skills, develop responsibility through age-appropriate chores, discover new talents, cultivate healthy habits, and learn the value of hard work. Every meaningful task completed today prepares a child for the responsibilities of tomorrow.

The modern world presents challenges that previous generations never imagined. Through smartphones and social media, children have access to information that can either build or destroy their values. While technology offers remarkable opportunities for learning and communication, it also exposes young minds to unhealthy content, dangerous relationships, and addictive habits.

Parents and guardians should therefore guide not merely control the digital lives of their children. Open conversations, clear boundaries, and consistent supervision create an environment where technology becomes a tool for growth rather than a source of harm.

The church also has a sacred calling during the holiday season. Its ministry extends far beyond Sabbath worship. Holidays provide an excellent opportunity for Vacation Bible Schools, Camp meetings, youth camps, Bible study groups, mentorship programs, community service projects, music training, leadership development, and evangelistic outreach. These activities not only strengthen young people's faith but also help them discover their gifts, build meaningful friendships, and develop confidence in serving God and humanity. Every church member has something valuable to contribute in mentoring the next generation.

Young people flourish best when parents, guardians, schools, and churches work together. No single institution can successfully raise a child in isolation. Consistent values, shared expectations, regular communication, and united prayer create an environment where children can grow emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Such partnerships produce resilient young people who are equipped to face the challenges of the future with wisdom and courage.

The holiday season is also an ideal time to discover and nurture gifts that may remain hidden during busy school terms. Some children may discover a passion for music, art, writing, farming, entrepreneurship, public speaking, technology, or community service. Others may deepen their spiritual gifts through Bible study, prayer, and ministry. Every child possesses God-given potential waiting to be cultivated. When adults intentionally encourage these talents, they help young people discover their purpose and prepare them for meaningful service in society and in God's kingdom.

As adults, we must remember that children are constantly becoming what they repeatedly experience. Every encouraging word, every lesson taught, every prayer offered, every correction given in love, and every moment spent together leaves a lasting impression. The harvest we desire tomorrow depends largely on the seeds we plant today. The holiday season provides fertile soil for planting those seeds.

Let us therefore resist the temptation to view holidays merely as a period of entertainment or relaxation. Instead, let us embrace them as a divine opportunity to invest in lives that will shape the future of our families, churches, communities, and nation. The children entrusted to us today are tomorrow's parents, teachers, pastors, professionals, and leaders. Our greatest legacy will not be the wealth we accumulate but the values we instill and the lives we nurture.

May every home become a place of love and learning. May every guardian become a source of wisdom and protection. May every church become a center of hope and discipleship. And may this holiday season be remembered as a season in which children grew not only in knowledge but also "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

When families nurture with love, churches mentor with purpose, and communities unite in guiding the young, the holiday season becomes far more than a school break it becomes a season of transformation, where lives are shaped, faith is strengthened, and futures are secured for the glory of God.

Pr Naftal Ondiba
Chaplain Tombe Girls