



## Time for a Parenting Stocktake!

Have you ever felt like a failure as a parent? I have, many times in fact. I find it's one thing to know the theory of good parenting, but it's a completely different thing to actually live it out and be a good parent. Too often I find myself looking over my shoulder and watching those seemingly 'wonderful' parents, and I come up short in comparison. And I look at those model children and then seem to notice the shortcomings of my own. If only ours could be one of those fantastic families that seem to have it 'all together'. And on and on my thoughts seem to go until I become thoroughly disillusioned.



That was the position I found myself in recently, and God chose to teach me a few things about parenting through it. Firstly, there are no perfect parents! We are all sinners and we will all fail in many different ways as we raise our children. God, the Father, is the only perfect parent and we do well to look to His example of parenting.

Secondly, comparing myself to others is not always a helpful thing. We are individuals, our children are individuals and our family make-up is unique. No other person will parent the way I do or you do. What are parenting strengths for me may well be parenting work areas for another person, and vice versa. We can certainly learn from the strengths of others, but we will apply those strengths in our individual way, and that is a good thing.

And finally, rather than dwell on the things I do not do well and feel like a failure, it is perhaps more helpful to regularly reassess my parenting and see what areas I can improve on. There is no time like the present to do that at the start of a new year.

Perhaps, like me, you are aware of your parenting weaknesses? Maybe you started with great ideals and zeal many years ago, but you have gone into autopilot and the enthusiasm has worn off? Could it be time to reassess your priorities and how you reflect those in daily living? As we begin a new year will you join me in taking a parenting stock-take and see how we can improve our skills in one of the most important jobs in the world?

*(Sharon Kirk, MU Diocesan President & Community Education Coordinator, Anglican Counselling Service - Diocese of Armidale. February 2010)*