

Lutheran Women in Mission

A "Prodigal" in the Family -- Leader's Guide By Rev. Larry A. Miller

The younger son was indeed *prodigal*! In what ways was he also . . .

- + **A *Selfish Son*** (vv.11-13), couldn't wait until his father was dead, he robbed his father, he showed no concern for his older brother, he had a total disregard for his family
- + **A *Sinful Son*** (v.13), lived in riotous living, and went away to a far country to hide his sin
- + **A *Starving Son*** (v.14), when he spent his all there was a mighty famine. Please note the order: first the spending, then the famine. Had he not spent extravagantly, perhaps the famine would not have been a problem.
- + **A *Smelly Son*** (vv.15-16), sells himself to a pig farmer to feed and care for the pigs. Every day in the urine and excrement, he seems to be getting just what he deserves.
- + **A *Sorry Son*** (v.17), came to himself with a two-fold revelation: a revelation of his father who provides for even his servants, his "temporary hired workers"; and a revelation of himself who was perishing with hunger and in his need saw how far he had fallen. With a revelation of himself, but no revelation of father, he won't go home! With a revelation of his father, but no revelation of himself, he won't go home! But with a revelation of himself and his condition and a revelation of his father he heads home!
- + **A *Son with a Speech*** (vv.18-20) would tell his father: "I have sinned!" "I am no longer worthy to be your son" "Make me as one of your hired servants"

What did the *prodigal* father in the parable extravagantly do for this younger son?

The father ...

Divided the property, waited for the son's return, had compassion on the son, shamed himself, became extreme in his response to his son's return, ran to him—not to judgment, not to war, but to love, embraced him, kissed him, put the best robe on him - covering his sin, and his signet ring—restoring him to the family, and shoes—worn not by servants but by sons, killed THE fattened calf, ate and celebrated rejoicing in his return (did they sing Amazing Grace?), because his wasteful, rebellious, ungrateful, woman-chasing, wine-drinking, pleasure-seeking, pig-feeding, death-deserving, cursed wanderer son had come home and after all that this son had done, now was home free and was, as always, his son!

What does the *prodigal* father extravagantly give to his younger son? He pours out grace, mercy and love! He loves this unlovely son!

The father is *prodigal*

also with the older son! Please read: Luke 15:25-32.

What are some of the characteristics of the older son? He would do all that he was supposed to do. He does not know how to love.

When he discovered that the other son had returned and that their father had welcomed him back,

what did the older son do? How did he feel? Were his actions and feelings justifiable? He was angry, envious, jealous, he refused to go in. He dissed his father and scorned his brother "this son of yours". He was as lost as his wandering brother ever was.

What did the Prodigal Father do? He came out and entreated his older son to come in, he reasoned with him, reached out to him, was as patient with him as he had been with the younger son. The older son, too was home free he was always home free! He loves this unlovely son!

God, our Father, is *prodigal*

also toward us! What key words and phrases indicate His extravagance?

- Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16 He made all things!
- Genesis 2:7; Psalm 139:13-14; Isaiah 43:1 He made us wonderful, His own, in baptism!
- Psalm 145:15-16; Psalm 31:15; 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 121:7-8; John 6:13 He still takes care of us!
- Galatians 4:4-5; John 8:36; Isaiah 53:4-5; Romans 8 He sent Jesus to redeem us!
- John 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:15; John 3:16 He gives us life to the full!
- Psalm 130:3-4; Psalm 32:5; 1 John 2:2 He welcomes us back home, forgiving our sins!
- Romans 8:38-39; 1 John 3:1; Psalm 103:13 He loves us prodigiously!
- Psalm 23:6; Psalm 106:1 His mercy, grace and love toward us endure forever!

Is it possible that God was being prodigal toward the younger son already when he was in the pigpen and his belly was aching with every rumble? Yes!

Is there a *prodigal in your family* ...

What are some basic things today's families need that the *prodigal* father in the parable expressed toward both of His children? mercy, grace, love