

Homeschooling in The Midst of Grief

‘How are you going to homeschool now?’

Have you ever been asked that question while recovering from the loss of a loved one or indeed when any crisis has struck your family? Well-meaning people are concerned only with how you will manage and probably just want to offer their help when they ask this question. But in the midst of trouble, your focus tends to be on survival. Schoolwork is quite possibly the last thing on your mind, and because you don’t get to choose the time of the crisis, your life comes to a complete halt right in the midst of exams, piano lessons, and regular schoolwork.

“We must say to ourselves and to our children, ‘There is never a series of little packages of time given to you in life labelled: TIME FOR AN ILLNESS . . . TIME FOR A DEATH . . . TIME FOR THREE CHILDREN WITH THE MUMPS . . . TIME FOR THE HOUSE TO BURN DOWN . . . TIME FOR A DISAPPOINTMENT.’ You can’t face the sickness, the operations, the broken arms and legs, the serious diseases, the disasters, or even the headaches, unless you realize there is never a convenient time set aside for joy or sorrow, protected by neat little walls so that the two things will not mingle and spoil each other.”¹

Education involves the giving of tools to children so that when they become adults they will be able to function in the world. Reading, writing, and math are tools they will need, but they will also need the tools that enable them to relate to others who are going through hard times. Most importantly they must learn to ‘Seek first the Kingdom of God and all the rest will be added unto you’. Matthew 6:33

They will need to fulfil these requirements if they are to be true servants:

What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.²

Understanding and compassion are tools required for the real world; tools that will enable a person to be well balanced and relevant to others, capable of relating in a time of grief. If these skills are part of children’s education, then they will be relevant to all people, because all people are bereaved at some point in their lives. Even if it is not the death of a child, it will be the death of a parent or grandparent, perhaps even a beloved friend, husband, or wife.

¹ Edith Schaeffer, from *What Is a Family?* page 91.

² Augustine.