

# Father's Day sermon outline

Provided by CVM

## Overview

There are children and young people in the UK who don't have a stable and loving home in which they can thrive.

The care system is in crisis, with thousands of children waiting for adoption, and a need for around 7,000 more foster carers.

Care experienced children and young people are over-represented in the UK's prison and homeless populations, and are at an increased risk of mental health concerns.

As Christians, we want to say 'Not on my watch'.

We want the Church to respond to the needs of looked after children and those responsible for them, and to be good news for care experienced children and young people.

## Bible reading

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*

### 1 Peter 5.1-3

## Introduction idea

Video clip of Apollo 13: <https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/apollo-13/not-on-my-watch> (watch it first to ensure suitability)

If you are unable to show the video here is a way to explain it:

In the film Apollo 13, Ed Harris plays the role of Gene Kranz, flight director at NASA HQ, as they attempt to work with the crew of Apollo 13 to bring them home safely to earth. The lunar landing was aborted when an oxygen tank exploded, crippling the service module. Without power and heat, and taking on carbon dioxide, Kranz demands that his team of NASA experts get to work;

**"We've never lost an American in space; we're sure as hell not going to lose one on my watch. Failure is not an option."**

Although we might not be comfortable with the term 'hell' – and you may wish to avoid it all together – the film makes a powerful point. This team refused to let the responsibility fall on anyone else, they didn't shy away from it but ran at the situation, head on!

In the film, Kranz sends the orders and begins to gather research, run simulations and call in all the

help they could find to get the situation sorted and save lives. This group decided to take responsibility for the situation as a group and as individuals in their own right, and when it comes to this being our watch, we have a chance to make an incredible difference in the lives of so many children in the UK.

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## Watch the CVM and Home for Good films

If you are unable to use the film, you could ask a few fathers to reflect on what changed for them when they had children, these can be as much fun or serious as you feel appropriate. (You could invite children to share!)

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## Sermon introduction

Today's bible reading talks about a duty of care and a pastoral responsibility to the leaders and elders of churches in Peter's time. He was moved to exhort those reading the letter to feel a genuine love and compassion for one another and, from the incredible grace they had received from the life of Jesus, they were to respond by caring for one another.

Let's reflect on this in three ways; adoption, faith, and action.

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### 1. Adoption - Ephesians 1:5

In the film there are three men who have made a decision to get involved and take on the role of father to children through adoption and fostering. In each case this was a decision that required some change: changes in finances, work, spaces in the home and changes to daily life on many levels. A change was required in mind-set too, but it was a change that has brought a fullness of life. This Bible reading today is building on the foundations of some incredible changes. The changes have been made because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and this central truth is what had shaped the lives of those who were initially getting this letter from Peter.

Because of their adoption into God's family there had been a wonderful change, from having no relationship and being separated from God, the life of Jesus had formed a way, a bridge back. This new life was literally an adoption into God's family – a significant change had happened.

Perhaps for someone today, there needs to be a change in their life? To accept Jesus for the first time or maybe to allow more of his life in. You may find this impacts your wallet, your time, your passions, your energy and resources, but it will be the best thing you have ever done. (If there is a time you could include a man's honest testimony of this change.)

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### 2. Faith - James 2:14-26

The theme and notion behind this instruction, to be alert and caring on your watch, covers a couple of things: faith and action together.

If we first consider the 'faith' element, there is an exhortation here that indicates the need to

encourage, support and care for someone else's spiritual journey and faith in Jesus Christ. The care and love that was being instructed wasn't simply a one-dimensional duty of care that provided a bed to sleep in our food to eat, but also a spiritual dimension.

This means being aware and engaged in the process of the spiritual journey, to share Jesus, to share the Bible (as we now have it) together, to pray and to be someone who shows up and gets involved. 'Not on my watch' is more than a call to social action, it is a wider call to show Jesus and take Jesus into the world, and to allow our lives to be transformed by his grace and mercy. What will that look like?

It means we can be men who love others and serve others with care, compassion and kindness. We can show that Jesus really is our King and He directs the patterns of our life.

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### 3. Action (James 2:14-26)

The next part of this faith and action combo is obviously 'action'. It isn't enough to just say we have faith but then do nothing about it. If I said that I was convinced that forgiveness is vital to our lives but I refuse to actually forgive the person who hurt me – well, it doesn't really work, does it?

The idea here is that if this really is our watch, and we are impacted by this in our hearts, then our faith needs to slot into some form of action. Now that may not mean that you instantly become a foster carer or adoptive parent, it may be different for you. Some will take that role and others will facilitate a fatherhood role to the kids at football training, or at the youth club, or to the young teenage apprentice on the building site. Being a father figure who is concerned with those in his care, both their spiritual formation and their physical and emotional journey, will mean we are resourceful and discover many ways to help.

**What could this 'faith and action' look like for you?**

**Are you impacted by the need to help children discover loving and caring families?**

**What can you do to use your skills and life to make a difference on your watch?**

