Genogram Questions

1. Describe each family member with two or three adjectives (parents, caretakers, grandparents, siblings, children).

2. Describe your parents’ (caretakers’) and grandparents’ marriages.

3. How was conflict handled in your extended family over two to three generations? Anger? Gender Roles?

4. What were some generational themes (e.g., addictions, affairs, losses, abuse, divorce, depression, mental illness, abortions, children born out of wedlock, etc.)?

5. How well did your family do in talking about feelings?

6. How was sexuality talked or not talked about? What were the implied messages?

7. Were there any family “secrets” (such as a pregnancy out of wedlock, incest, or major financial scandal)?

8. What was considered “success” in your family?

9. How was money handled? Spiritually? Holidays? Relationships with extended family?

10. How did your family’s ethnicity shape you?

11. Were there any heroes or heroines in the family? Scapegoats? “Losers”? Why?

12. What kinds of addictions, if any, existed in the family?

13. Where there traumatic losses in the past or present, such as sudden death, prolonged illnesses, stillbirths/miscarriages, bankruptcy, or divorce?

The above exercise, while painful, leads us to ask three essential questions if we are going to live and lead with integrity.

1. What one or two patterns might emerge of how your family has impacted who you are today?

2. In what area(s) might you be shaping your life and your ministry [calling] according to your past rather than Christ’s family?

3. What “hard work of discipleship” might you have before you?

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The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives, Peter Scazzero (Zondervan, 2010), p. 98. “The following are the kinds of questions we ask to attempt to get beneath the surface at how the past might be impacting the present. We ask people to fill out the genogram through the eyes of their childhood (as if between eight and twelve years old).”