

February 28, 1989

Concerning Visiting Parents

The situation which has happened with the parents of Haggai and Hadashah is something we all need to learn from:

They were typical friendly grandparents the first four or five visits to the community. They stayed in our home and participated somewhat in community activities, getting to know some of the people. Then they visited once during a hard time in Sus with Dante and one other brother who was insincere. The parents saw the trouble in the community and began to make judgements about it. They felt the community would soon fall apart in they continued to let unsteady people stay. They became critical.

They had always expressed disapproval about Haggai's discipline of the children. Inviting Haggai to come visit them with his family, they made it clear that he would never be allowed to spank them under their roof.

On a later visit Yoneq was there and the father was offended that Yoneq was not very friendly to him. When Yoneq then sent special word for him to be sure to attend the teaching that evening, the father refused to come. He was also overheard talking to Haggai's nephew Samuel (13 years old at the time), telling him that he would need to get a diploma from a "school" to be able to get a good job someday. He seemed to be offering Samuel a way to be helped by him to do this.

When Haggai heard about this he confronted the parents, but the father denied any evil intent in his conversation with Samuel.

They also were very upset when they heard Hadasha was pregnant with her fourth child, saying they had enough children. Though not specifically mentioning abortion, Haggai knew that they approved of such things.

After they left it became clear to Haggai and the brothers that something needed to change.

One month later their parents took a trip to America and visited Island Pond. Rather than being grateful for the warm hospitality they received, they were judging the community critically, saying the people there were too busy with their jobs, and it was so crowded people were sleeping on the dining room floor (the people who gave up their room for the parents did sleep in the dining room that night).

Upon hearing this negative report from them, it was decided that they must be disciplined. Haggai called them and told them that they would not be allowed to visit Sus for a time because of his behavior, and that he would need to repent from his actions with Samuel and his general judgmental attitude. The father was enraged, saying he *would come* visit his grandchildren and no one could stop him.

After receiving a letter from them that they were planning another visit soon, Haggai wrote a letter making it *very* clear that they would not be allowed to come for two years and that they must repent. He told them that because they did not understand our whole purpose for life that they could not even rejoice in the news of the pregnancy of Hadasha, and that they would even have murder in their hearts toward their unborn child. If they were allowed to return in two years they would have to come with a different spirit, making public apology, not being judgmental, bringing no candy to the children, working each day in the community during their visit.

Haggai did not hear a word from them for the next two and a half years. Not one birthday card or Christmas card. After the birth of their fifth child he sent them a short letter, letting them know that this child was now two months old, but because of their bad attitude he had not even informed them of the pregnancy of Hadasha.

The parents wrote soon after this a very cautious note, not sure what they could say. Then he called asking what they should do now. Haggai told them they must repent from judging our life, letting them know that this life is not just something that some young people are into but that it is serious and it is for them also.

They called again soon after this asking if they could come and apologize. When told "Yes" by Haggai, they drove 600 kilometers the next day to Tabitha's Place. At the gathering that night the father spoke apologizing for everything he had done. They immediately joined in with the life as they were instructed to do. They were told not to be foolish with the children and they respectfully complied. They were told to treat the children in the same way Haggai and Hadasha treated them. The parents acknowledged the good fruit they saw in their grandchildren, after comparing them to other grandchildren the same age who were raised without discipline. They even began bringing the children to their mother when they saw the children do something wrong for Hadasah to discipline them. Haggai once disciplined one of his children right in front of the parents without feeling the least bit of resistance from them concerning it.

Haggai's firm stand has produced good fruit. Parents must conform to our standard. They must come to respect us. Their parents have visited three times now and each time they work along with Haggai and Hadasha, he in the woodshop, she in the kitchen. They come to gatherings and are completely submissive.