

## Baseball's Harmon Killebrew



Minnesota's batting star stands out in bold relief to other players' swinging life-styles.

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season of big-league baseball. It's not all glamour, he says. He particularly dislikes the frequent separations from his wife and children. Six weeks of spring training and all the regular-season road games keep him away from home a lot of the time.

So how does the home-run slugger maintain his patriarchal influence in the Killebrew home?

"I've learned the difference between quantity time and quality time with my wife and kids," he says. "Merely sitting in the same room watching TV isn't real quality time. At our home we *do* things together." A particular key is something called Family Home Evening, a program that happens to be instituted by Harmon's church (he's a Mormon), but which could work in any home. In the Killebrew home it works like this:

One night a week is sacrosanct. No outside activities are scheduled. Harmon, his wife and five children get together for an evening all to themselves. "On that special night we may cook a favorite recipe together," Killebrew says, "or play games, or sing songs, or plan a fishing trip or leaf through the family scrapbooks. But most important, we're together."

"On those evenings we can discuss

each other's personal aspirations. We can solve family difficulties as a group, not as a know-it-all father handing down decisions. We hold family councils, and there we work out the rules of our household. A child is much more apt to obey a rule if he helped set it."

Killebrew has some specific ideas on how parents can combat distractions that discourage family unity. "Children should be taught early that they're a special part of their family and not an intrusion into a marriage. Their feelings, apprehensions and yearnings must be considered from the beginning. A child is drawn from his family only if it fails to meet his needs as a human being. The home must be made the center of a child's life, not just a place where he sleeps

**"Nobody—especially a teenager—will learn from a hypocrite."**

and picks up some lunch money. There's nothing more fun than searching and discovering as a family."

And how does he suggest a father gain the confidence and respect of his children?

"The obvious answer is really the only good answer," he says. "Set a good example. It's foolish to do things you don't want your children doing. Even at an early age, children are often more discerning than we give them credit for. A big mistake is for a parent to take the attitude of 'Do as I say, not as I do.' That's hypocrisy, and nobody—especially a teenager—will learn from a hypocrite."

Killebrew believes effective parenthood has far-reaching implications, and likes to illustrate his point with an anecdote:

"One evening, a young boy approached his father, who was lounging in an easy chair reading the paper. 'Dad, will you help me put this puzzle together?' the youngster asked. 'It's a beautiful map of the world.' But his dad wanted to relax and told him to do it alone. The boy later returned and again requested help, but again his father asked not to be bothered. Finally the boy announced, 'Look, Dad, I put the map together!' His father replied, 'That's great. How'd you do it so fast?' And the boy answered, 'I turned the puzzle over, and there was a boy on the back. I discovered that if I put the boy together all right, the world came out okay.'"

"Now that story may seem corny to some," Killebrew says. "But it's the way I feel. If we help our children put themselves together right, the whole world might eventually straighten itself out."

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