



fatherhood, the church & the first thousand days

The role of faith communities in encouraging engaged fatherhood during pregnancy and the first two years.

webinar 1: why fathers matter

13 May recording: https://youtu.be/3Vd8_YDRYaQ

Fathers play an important role in the wellbeing of baby and mother. This webinar explored the unique window of time that is the First Thousand Days of a child's life, the benefit of fathers engaging during this time, and the opportunity that the church has in encouraging positive fatherhood engagement.

To explore further the research informing Sikunye's work, you can read our [published](#) research project: [The Church's role in supporting human development in the First Thousand Days.](#)

what is the first thousand days? why is it so important?

Dr Hilary Goeiman

Dr Goeiman's presentation can be found [here](#). Please note the range of websites that explain the science behind the First Thousand Days, found on page 31. Dr Goeiman's contact details are on page 34.

the state of fatherhood in South Africa

Dr Tawanda Makusha

Dr Makusha's presentation can be found [here](#). Dr Makusha referenced the [State of South Africa's Fathers](#) full report, located on the Sonke Gender Justice website (not data free).

the benefit of father engagement with a focus on the First Thousand Days

Dr Mark Tomlinson

Dr Tomlinson, along with colleagues in the Department of Global Health at the University of Stellenbosch have written a chapter in a soon-to-be-published book on fatherhood. You can read their last draft [here](#).

the opportunity that the church has to reach fathers

Dr Deborah Hancox

Dr Hancox referenced the assets of churches, found in The Barefoot Guide and recommends Guide 3: [Mobilizing Religious Health Assets for Transformation](#). The book, Deeply Woven Roots, by Gary Gunderson, can be found on Amazon.

For those wanting to explore this theme from a more academic angle, Dr Hancox recommends two articles by Professor Nadine Bouwers-du Toit: [Meeting the challenge of poverty and inequality? 'Hindrances and helps' with regard to congregational mobilisation in South Africa](#) and [The elephant in the room: The need to re-discover the intersection between poverty, powerlessness and power in 'Theology and Development' praxis](#).

If you've come across some helpful resources that you'd like to share with us and contribute to this discussion, please post these on Twitter and tag @Sikunye. Let's keep the conversation going in our communities, work circles and networks of influence as we grapple with such an important topic and look to find complementary approaches.

Infants are exquisitely primed for exploration, for learning, for curiosity, and this is from the very first moments of birth – you will see them turn to the sound of their mother's voice, you will see them seek out their mother's face, they seek out the father's face.

Dr Mark Tomlinson

