

## Reflections

### Family is a blessing

A FEW weeks ago there was an article in the Okehampton Times about the nationwide need for 7,600 more families to offer homes to the rising number of children referred for care.

Almost every family interviewed in that article spoke about the noblest task of fostering a child and all cited more joy than challenges in their caring and sharing as a family.

As Princess Diana once so intuitively said, 'Family is the most important thing in the world'. It is indeed so.

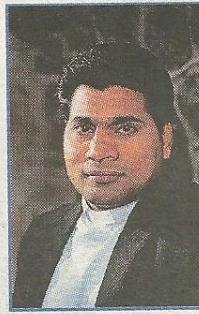
As a society, our benevolent urge to care for deserving children has led us to try various methods of care: orphanages, children's homes, youth treatment centres and rehabilitation homes, mostly run by religious groups and charities.

These provide housing, education and care of the children, but none can serve as well as the family.

This is the reason for the Fostering Foundation UK's plea for more foster families.

A good family is a place of blessing where love flows naturally and unconditionally. It is where we begin to live, and learn how to face success and failure. A healthy family offers solid emotional and relationship support and security.

It is a place of peace and joy, providing not only the important social fabric, but also everything that helps a child develop as a healthy individual, as a valuable member of a



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community and as a conscientious member of a civilized nation.

A good family is a launch pad that supports the development of good personality and positive change.

According to a research by Global Development Organisation, the UK has the highest rate of family breakdown in the western world.

This results in huge economic, social and emotional cost, and relationship misery.

A report issued by the Centre for Social Justice states: 'the overriding priority of family policy...is best summed up in one statistic, 48% of all children born today will see the breakdown of their parents' relationship'.

The disruption of family breakdown reflects on the wellbeing of the children in these families.

This must change if we are to protect the children.

Most of the problems in the family can be solved if we try to follow what St Paul would say: 'Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.' (Colossians 3:13)