

# Honoring Families, Loving Our Neighbors

## Introduction

The pandemic placed phenomenal strain on families. It also revealed the true extent of the work families have long shouldered alone. Families have been making tough choices for so long that these trade-offs feel normal even as routine sacrifices wear down the foundations of family life. Many Americans raise the question that Christian author Gracy Olmstead does: “How is it that, in an incredibly wealthy country – one in which most Americans believe strongly that families matter, and ought to be protected and preserved – we seem to be selling families so short?”<sup>1</sup>

Americans are now reckoning with burnout and fatigue. Many desire a wider range of choices in how they knit together work and caregiving. Returning to pre-COVID arrangements will not be enough. Maternal health advocate Khadija Garrison Adams puts it this way: “We want to honor the whole of life, rather than live in a world of pieces.”

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Employers that treat workers’ caregiving responsibilities with rigidity or as disconnected from their presence at work could find themselves unable to recruit and retain workers.

So too, changes on the horizon in abortion law mean it is even more urgent to address the material needs of expectant and new parents. In surveys of women seeking an abortion, one of the most common reasons given by women for making that choice was that they did not believe they could afford to cover financial costs related to raising a child (73 percent).<sup>2</sup> It is crucial that expectant parents be assured of a world in which they will be supported in caring for a new child.

In 2021, the Center for Public Justice Families Valued Program convened a council of leaders from different Christian traditions and theological perspectives, walks and stages of life, and spheres of

