

Our family is made of characters that possess different traits that define us. The traits shown in the genogram, are the main people who define our family and what has been happening to individuals. It dates back to our grandparents, parents, siblings and children. Some are deceased while others are living, married and divorced, some are mentally ill while most are normal. There are cases of drug and substance abuse among many other characteristics. The above genogram is a pictorial description of the family genogram that spans four generations. It indicates the social relationships, emotional relationships, family relationship among others within our family. In this genogram, I will describe how our family with various generations have been fairing in various issue such as going to church, socializing, mental illness marriage among others¹.

I will start with Sarah who was my grandmother. She is deceased now and was my father's mother. She was born in 1945 and I learned from my aunt that she was a clerk at the post office. Having a gait of about five feet, she was of a normal height like myself. She used to wear glasses and loved drinking African coffee. She was always dedicated to achieving her goals and loved being close to her family. Together with my grandfather, her husband whose name was Fred, they had my father. She had one child and he was my father. Her childhood was rather interesting as at the time it was mired with various activities that are hard to carry out today due

¹ Bahr, K. S. 1990. "Student Responses to genograms and family chronology." *Family Relations* 293-249.

to improvement in technology². She loved my grandfather so much that when he died, she got sick and died the next month.

My grandfather from my father's side was named Fred. He was a heavily built man with an athletic body. He loved athletics and participated in them in his youth. He was born in the year 1943 during the World War II. He died in 2013 due to stroke. He was a good man who we loved associating and socializing with. I always wanted to be near him to listen to various stories he would give us about how life was in the 1950s. He was always interesting with a heavy and strong voice that attracted many. He loved my grandmother so much and always told us to love our spouse as we would emulate him. Further, he was always serious about education and wanted us all his grandchildren to attend and do well in school.

Victor is my father. He was the only child of my grandparents and he was brought up in a good neighborhood. They loved him so much and got him in their middle age. He was a good kid according to them and they loved him so much. He was their only son. He died of injuries from a motor accident in the year 2010. His death is blamed for the ailment and death of his father and mother. I remember looking into my grandfather's eyes and seeing such sorrow and grief that I felt my father to his life with him as well. It scared me as well not just for the mere fact that he was a great father, my father but all of the life lessons he instilled in us that I won't get a chance to hear any longer and how one of my biggest inspirations has left me.

Julia, my grandmother, and the mother of my mother, is an 80-year-old woman and still has the sparkle and spunk of her twenties. She is still alive to date and very healthy. She has a

² Doxey, J. B. 1993. *Genograms: A tool for Increasing lineage consciousness*. Birmingham: Brigham Young University Press.

never allowed anyone to rain on his parade. Unfortunately, Peter died at the tender age of 30 due to his battle with AIDS.

My mother Liza is the age of 56 years old. She's a very hard worker, who works for a hospital as a technician. As a child, my mother was sexual abused by a friend of her father. My mother never really wanted to talk about it as if it never happened. Liza was able to recover from the event even though it was from much persuasion. She hated men due to that incident though she changed her heart later. Since I was a child, she has taught me and my sibling of the importance of going to church and being committed to the life issues. Since father passed on, she has fared well and remained strong. This has been a good indication that although they were emotionally attached, she has accepted the fate and allowed it to go the path it so wishes. Although she was a victim of sexual abuse, she managed to get out of it and moved on with life. It did not affect her adult life although much of the impact was washed away through a lot of counselling.⁵

The children to Liza and Victor are Eric, Jim and myself. Eric is 28 years old and was a carpenter. He developed mental illness at an early stage in life and thus had to drop his carpentry and be supported by family members. He has managed to maintain a low profile since then and after going through much therapy, he was admitted in a special needs school and later came out. Now he is easy to manage and at times when he is in good spirit he can do carpentry well. He is in an emotional relationship with Michelle who is 29 years old. He has managed to go through the mental problem part and came out strong.

⁵ McGooldrick, M. 1985. *Genograms in family assessment*. New York: W.W. Norton.

common. She was molested as a child as well. When it comes to my brother, Michelle always ask for my advice in dealing with him. I take her as my sister and encourage her when it seems to get tough for her and the kids.

Jim on the other hand was married to June. Their marriage lasted several years and they got two kids that is Danielle, and Jen. She has also passed through the criminal justice system and suffered from a drug and substance abuse. She was incarcerated for the same reason of drug abuse and is still serving in the facility. This has caused them to divorce with my brother Jim with Jim taking care of the children. It is at times hard considering that he is also out of the incarceration facility and still having the side effects of having to do without drugs. He has managed to be a good father to his children and that is all that matters. June will be out in few months' time but since they are officially divorced, she will not be in Jim's home any longer.

Beth is a 17 year old girl born of Michelle and Eric. She is already facing issues with the criminal justice system due to drug abuse. She has associated herself with criminals and thus caught up in crime. Although she is not yet prosecuted, she will soon be if the trend continues. She is in drug and substance abuse and has been warned several time to no avail. She needs a lot of counselling. Perhaps it is the lack of a father figure that makes her vulnerable owing to the fact that she needs to be constantly be observed and be counselled. At her age, it is easily possible for her to fall to peer pressure a phenomenon that affects teenagers a lot in their search for acceptability and a sense of belonging.

Edward is a brother to Beth and a son to Michelle and Eric. He is 9 years old and well in his junior school. He is young and understanding. To his mother, he is a pillar of hope that something will turn out right in her life. She takes him as the one to help her and his father out of their predicament. Unlike his sister, Beth, Edward is a bright young boy, whose dreams are still

The genogram further shows the couple that has been divorced or not. The system indicates whether one is still alive or is deceased as well as whether an individual is involved in substance and drug abuse problem and whether he or she is a male or female.

The assignment has made me learn that the family is an important shaper of destiny and can either make one realize their potential or make one lose their vision. Commitment to excellence is important but can only happen if one has the support of the family. The above view of my family shows me that I can get what I want if only I am dedicated to pursuing what I want. The dynamics in my family have helped me to learn several things about myself and has influence the perspectives and practices of my pastoral ministry. The family has different characters and each character has unique traits. One thing this analysis helps me to do is the ability to understand where people come from. When I am in a Pastoral Care position or case study, I am more knowledgeable and aware to gain detailed information on the family history of an individual due to the lessons learned from this assignment and Readings from class. The trait of the sexual abuse in my family has helped me in focusing on my women's ministry to help women have their voices and opinions heard with volume, love, care and respect and only we as a community must try harder to hear those voices and that is my goal to have a organization with a door open policy.