

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Families First

It is remarkable how many turning points in Torah are events in a family. Not only Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, but Abraham and Sarah emigrating and Jacob and Esau fighting and Joseph struggling with his brothers. Also, the fidelity of Ruth to Naomi and Esther to Mordecai and Absalom's betrayal of his father David and Solomon's succession and on and on.

There are grand sweeping events and national crises as well. Yet for a book that unfolds the drama of the created world, the Tanach reminds us repeatedly that families are the lifeblood of a nation. I once heard Israeli writer Amos Oz say that he would rather be a fly on the wall in the living room

of any family than an astronaut because there is more adventure in the former than the latter.

When we turn the dinner table into an altar through prayer, when we place our hands on our children's heads and bless them, we are enacting the great human drama. It is natural to assume that an epic should be set on the battlefield or the mountaintop. But the Torah reminds us everything begins with families, the precious first spring of human hopes, errors and dreams.

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Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.