

## **COMMON EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION ON THE FAMILY**

### THE ALCOHOLIC

- Denies the alcohol problem, blames others, forgets and tells stories to defend and protect against humiliation, attack, and criticism from others in the family
- Spends money for day-to-day family needs on alcohol
- Ignores bills; debts pile up
- Becomes unpredictable and impulsive in behavior
- Resorts to verbal and physical abuse in place of honest open talk
- Loses trust of family, relatives, and friends
- Experiences diminishing sexual drive
- Has feeling of despair and hopelessness
- Thinks about suicide and possibly will make an attempt
- Shows deterioration of physical health
- Becomes uninterested in appearance and personal hygiene
- Usually looks older than stated age

### THE SPOUSE/PARTNER

- Often tries to hide and deny the existing problem of the alcoholic member
- Takes on the responsibilities of the other person, carrying the load of two and perpetuating the spouse/partner dependence
- Takes a job, to get away from the problem and/or to maintain financial security
- Finds it difficult to be open and honest because of resentment, anger, and hurt feelings
- Avoids sexual contact
- May over-protect the children, neglect them, and/or use them for emotional support
- Shows gradual social withdrawal and isolation
- May lose feelings of self-respect and self-worth
- May use alcohol or prescription drugs in an effort to cope
- May seek separation or divorce

### THE CHILDREN

- May be victims of birth defects
- May be torn between two parents; trying being loyal to one, they arouse and feel the anger of the other
- May be deprived of emotional and physical support
- Avoid peer group activities, especially in the home, out of fear and shame
- Learn destructive and negative ways of dealing with problems and getting attention
- Lack trust in anyone
- May lose sight of values, standards, and gods because of the absence of consistent, strong parenting