

EDITION 9 - MEN'S AND WOMEN'S DAY

FAMILIES ON THE EDGE

On Women's day, the streets of Kiev are filled with flowers



CELEBRATING MEN AND WOMEN

Honoring men and women is something important to most cultures, and is certainly in the Bible as well. In Ukraine, most people do not celebrate Mother's Day and Father's day the way you do in America. Instead, they celebrate Men's Day and Women's Day. On these holidays, Ukrainians congratulate men and women of all ages!

Men's Day: February 23

The first of these holidays is Men's Day. Men's Day in Ukraine is something like Father's Day in America, except that it is for all men, not only fathers. In the past, Men's Day was known as The Soviet Army Day. It was a day to show your respect for all the generations of men who served as soldiers or military men, and helped defend the "motherland" against invaders. Now, this holiday is an opportunity for families to prepare a nice dinner, give gifts, and show appreciation for the important role that the men (and boys) in our lives.

To celebrate Men's Day, take some time to honor the men in your family or bible talk. If you like, you can even plan a special dinner or make cards and gifts to show them your love and appreciation.

International Women's Day: March 8

Women's Day for Ukrainians is kind of like a mix of your Mother's Day and Valentine's Day. A few days in advance, the city streets are literally flooded with flower stands. Mothers, daughter, grandmothers, teachers and coworkers are all congratulated, with flowers, chocolates and other gifts on this special day.

You may be surprised to hear that International Women's Day came to the Ukraine all the way from New York City! On March 8, 1957, women working in clothing and textile factories in New York had a political protest. This anniversary was later named International Women's Day. The USSR adopted this holiday, and it remains a very popular holiday throughout Eastern Europe, where on this day every woman becomes a queen.

A WOMEN'S DAY STORY

The 8th of March in Ukraine is a holiday for women. In our church, we try to use every opportunity to bring many new women to church and introduce them to God. Me and my two girls, Sasha and Olya, prepare for this day a few months in advance. The girls try to prepare an interesting presentation for the holiday celebration concert, with the goal to encourage and do something special for the guests. As their mom, I help them do that. Also, we invite women around us for this special and spiritual event. Last year, God generously blessed our efforts and prayers. For the first time in six years, one of my daughters' teachers came, and brought her mother along. Three schoolmates also came along with their mothers. This really encouraged the faith of our whole family.

We believe that God wants us to give Him all of our heart and strength. Let Him be praised!

Lena Koftanuk, Kiev



Sasha and Olya
Koftanuk



FROM THE FOREIGNER PERSPECTIVE



Single sisters on Women's Day

Men's day and Women's day were something new for me, but now are something I really look forward to! In the Kiev church, and in our singles bible talk, everyone really goes all out. Last year, on Men's Day, the sisters prepared a series of competitions for the single brothers to test their "manhood." This included contests such as "who can give the best compliment," sewing buttons, and throwing paper wads into a basket. On Women's Day, our brothers prepared for us delicious food, entertainment, and flowers. They also forced us to participate in a video game competition! I have grown to really love this "Soviet" tradition.

Rebekah Weidner

DISCUSSION:

Why is it important to have women in the family? What do you like about your mom and/or sisters?

What do the men in the family do? What do you like about having a father and/or brothers?

ACTIVITY:

Encouragement Web: Find or buy a ball of yarn. Stand in a circle and take turns encouraging or thanking someone, as you throw them the ball of yarn. Girls, thank the boys and vice-versa. When you finish, you will have made a web. If you like, try to undo the web by playing in reverse.

CHALLENGE:

This month, choose a special day to celebrate the men and women in your family or Bible talk!