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Let's Hear it for the Homemakers

Margaret Ross

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Let's Hear it for the Homemakers

MANY PEOPLE ARE UNDERVALUED IN OUR SOCIETY. PREJUDICE has been forced into the light in recent years and people are now actively warring against it. As a society and world, we need equality. We need protection for those who can't protect themselves. Pushing out prejudice is a must. People should have opportunities to live the life they want, but oftentimes when we "push out prejudice," we are only replacing it with prejudice towards another group. We have seen this countless times in society, but there is one branch in particular that I would like to focus on, The Homemaker. To put it simply, a homemaker is someone who chooses not to work so they can stay home and take care of things there; they can be a man or a woman, have children or not.

The history of homemakers is intertwined with women's rights. In the past, women had no other option than to stay home. This is no longer the case. In the past fifty years, women have had the option to go to work and it has granted a lot of freedom and growth. Unfortunately, our celebration of this freedom has forced women into another form of bondage. We say that women can do whatever they want with their lives and are free to choose, but when a woman chooses to stay at home, she is ridiculed. Homemakers provide an abundance for society and for families; they are often the backbones of communities. They are undervalued, unappreciated, and ridiculed, which leads to a lack of women's rights.

It has always been my dream to be a homemaker, and when I was young there was always talk about how women could do anything they wanted so I expected to be supported in this. So you can imagine my surprise that when I talked about my plans, I was treated with hostility and contempt. One of the major persecutors was my high school homeroom teacher. We were talking about the future and I told her about my dream to be a homemaker, and in the same breath told her about my dream college. Immediately she started pestering me about how being a homemaker was useless. From that moment

on, she treated me like I was stupid and wanted to get pregnant at sixteen and drop out. She would often lecture me about needing to go to college in front of the entire class. She even went as far as to start chiding my mother—who was and is a wonderful homemaker—about it. This type of prejudice has been a constant in her and my life. After these early experiences, I started paying more attention to the advertisements and media that professed that “girls can do anything!” Every single one of them featured only little girls learning about STEM careers. They effectively told women that if they didn’t go into traditionally masculine fields, they were letting the rest of the women down. And the propaganda worked! Countless teachers and other leaders told me this. At a young age, it became apparent that women can be whatever they want so long as it conforms to the feminist agenda, and homemaker does not make the cut.

When I tell people my aims of being a homemaker, concerns like these are often raised: What if you don’t have children? What if your husband dies? How will you live on one income? Aren’t you supporting female oppression by staying home? A lot of these concerns are valid, and I hope to properly address them here.

What if you don’t have children? Having children is not necessary to being a homemaker. Homemakers do a lot more than raise children, and you can add value to society by staying home without children.

What if your spouse dies? Luckily, we have been blessed to live in a time and place where most anyone can work. If a homemaker suddenly found themselves without income, they would seek out a job, just like most people would if they were to lose their job. Sometimes that would require going back to school or starting in an unrelated career path, but it is manageable. People who lose their jobs have to figure out how to support themselves; a homemaker’s situation would be no different.

How will you live off of one income? By being frugal and wise. Single parents have to do it. And this question assumes that homemakers don’t add any financial value to the household, which is false. Just a quick google search will show you dozens of articles and posts detailing the true worth of a homemaker if they were paid. One particular article from *Business Insider* says, “The daily work of a homemaker can sometimes be taken for granted by his or her family members. However, these services could earn a homemaker a considerable wage if he or she took those skills to the marketplace. Homemakers, in general, contribute a lot more to the home in addition to these tasks, and no amount of money can fill those needs” (Moran). Of course, not everyone in life will have this option. A lot of factors play into the ability to be a homemaker, like

the cost of living, what your spouse does, etc.; but for a lot of people this is a feasible path, though not always a financially lucrative one.

Finally, my personal favorite question: Aren't you supporting female oppression by being a homemaker? The answer is no. We would be supporting female oppression if we let the pressures from other people dictate what we want to do with our life. The whole question shows how limited the perspective of freedom is. Feminism is supposed to allow women to do what they want to do; following my dreams is the opposite of being oppressed. It also shows a lack of faith in men. It assumes that my husband would be controlling me and forcing me to stay home. Successful homemaking situations are equal partnerships between spouses. There are certain things that need to be done to run a household, like finances and housekeeping, and having a homemaker is simply a partnership dividing up how to do those jobs. Additionally, this question discludes men, who also face oppression in homemaking. Homemaking is empowering for those who wish to do it, not oppressing.

Homemakers provide a lot for society. The most obvious thing that homemakers (who are also parents) contribute would be to the well-being of their children. Study after study shows that the more time and attention children get from their parents, the more likely they are to succeed in the future. Being a homemaker allows for that time and attention to be given. Apryl Duncan, a professional writer with an emphasis in family-focused content, states, "A 2014 study found that the benefits of having a parent at home extend beyond the early years of a child's life. In the study, the educational performance of 68,000 children was measured. They found an increase in school performance all the way to high school-aged children." Families with one of the parents at home tend to be more stable environments for children, leading to greater mental health and more academic success. All of these facts culminate into giving children greater opportunities in the future.

Homemakers also have more time to volunteer in the community. In almost every community there are people who are struggling to provide for themselves, who rely on charities such as food shelves, after-school programs, etc. A lot of these organizations rely heavily on volunteers, and while people who work full time can't be there during the work week, homemakers have the time to help—and often do. They also volunteer in their children's schools as the PTA or help with tutoring both in the schools or in other volunteer organizations, making sure all the children are getting what they need. Homemakers have time to be involved in the running of their home. They will often meal plan, clean, and do the other things that have a tendency to fall through

the cracks but help make life healthier and more stable. Homemakers are invaluable in the home and in the community.

As I conclude, I want to make it clear that I am not advocating for all women to stay home, or for all men to stay home. I am advocating so that anyone who wants to be a homemaker can be free from judgment or persecution. I advocate for appreciation for this minority of people who do so much for the communities and for their families, for this group of people who are often overworked and underappreciated. I am advocating for the true freedom to follow any career path. Homemakers provide many services for society by volunteering and being involved in various programs and organizations as well as raising a new well rounded generation that will continue to better the community, and they should be thanked, not belittled.

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