

Free to Be Me

CARE AND FEEDING OF OUR SPIRIT

For Ourselves and Others

Provide what has traditionally been called “spiritual”

- At church and in-home devotions
- Communion – a special gift of spiritual food from our Lord (John 6:48-58)
- Intercessory prayers, prayer of thanks at mealtimes, bedtime prayers, prayer as daily conversations, inviting God into all situations: hurts, joys, etc.
- **For children** – pray blessings on them before school, bedtime, special occasions, anytime

Provide what has not traditionally been called “spiritual” (but it is!)

- **Give and receive abundant, unlimited AFFECTION** (hugs, thumbs up, etc.)
 - Freely given, not earned.
 - **For children** - affection from primary caregivers, especially parents, identifies sense of belonging and approval.
- **Family Times**
 - Regular family gatherings, as well as with extended family through reunions, strengthens ties, connects with family roots and builds identity.
 - Make mealtime a time of connecting to one another.
- **Initiate conversation**
 - Speak individually and uniquely to each person.
 - Provide a safe environment to share who they are, what they need and what they feel.
- **Appreciation of Beauty**
 - Found in nature, paintings, sculptures, etc. (God designed His temple to contain art, and the number of art pieces increased the closer you came to the heart of the temple complex – see 1 Kings 6).
 - Play uplifting music. Seek out quality music that moves your spirit.
 - Experience life with all of your senses.
- **Develop good reading habits (it’s never too late to start!)**
 - Read poetry, fantasy (not just informational or religious books)
 - Read about characters like saints and heroes who build strength of will and desire into the spirit.
- **Provide opportunities for adventure.**
 - Hiking, exploring, learning about other countries and cultures.
 - Consider reading together as a family to share the experience.

- **Encourage laughter (Proverbs 17:22)**
- **Work together (Ecclesiastes 4:9)**
Beware of making chores a punishment for kids – can cause reluctance toward chores as adults and create dysfunction. Instill joy of chores and work.
- **Play together (Matthew 11:16-17)**
- **Discipline (not just right and wrong, but personal boundaries to balance self with others)**
 - Teach and model healthy boundaries and consequences for actions.
 - Demeaning and/or harsh punishment is harmful and not the same as training and equipping through discipline.
 - **For children** - this teaches truth, justice, peace and healing.