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FAMILY PRAYER PLAN
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Prayer in Your Home

Studies have shown that the simple routine of praying together at home makes it much more likely you will ...

- Build a life-long, thriving marriage
- Strengthen your relationship with your children and teens
- Nurture strong faith in the hearts of your children and teens
- Reduce the level of tension in your home
- Increase marital trust, respect and intimacy

Life makes many demands on today's families, and lives are often full and hectic. Finding the time for prayer can seem difficult - especially if you aren't sure where to begin or how to pray as a family.

Praying and growing together as a family is a gift that will sustain each member of your family throughout the storms of this life and one that will prepare you all for the next life.

MAKE A PLAN

John Piper, in his book *Desiring God*, says that a main hindrance to prayer is our lack of planning.

"If you want to take a four-week vacation, you don't just get up one summer morning and say, 'Hey, let's go today!' You won't have anything ready. You won't know where to go. Nothing has been planned."

Take the time to create a plan for your own personal prayer life and for the prayer life of your family. The plan should be written down and agreed upon and discussed by everyone in the family. It doesn't have to be rigidly followed, but can serve as a grounding reminder -- a thriving, regular, consistent time of worship of and communion with God in prayer.

#752 PRAYER @HOME

- 7** Pray seven days a week individually for yourself, your spouse, kids, grandkids, parents & siblings.
- 5** Pray five times a week as a family including meals & bedtime.
- 2** Pray at least two times a week with your spouse.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done."
Philippians 4:6-7

It Starts With You

From the newborn who sticks out her tongue after watching Mom do it, to the toddler who snags dad's phone and pretends to send a text, to the child who gathers his friends to play school, children learn best through imitation. It is no different with prayer.

Making time to foster your own prayer life and letting your children see you pray does more to teach them about the value of prayer than any book, DVD, or religion class lesson ever can.

PERSONAL PLAN...

While prayer should be a natural and frequent part of every Christian's daily life, it can easily be neglected. If we are not careful, we can let dozens of activities distract us from spending quality time in prayer (and quantity of time as well). Begin by developing your personal prayer plan (use the tool on the next pages to help).

...THEN FAMILY PLAN

Parents play a vital role in developing the prayer life of the family. What kind of prayer life does your family need? What kind of prayer will work with your children? What kind of prayer is your spouse comfortable with?

Once you have decided on a prayer routine for yourself and begun to implement it, have a family meeting to

create a family prayer plan and individual prayer plans for each family member.

BE REALISTIC

When you have young children and are talking to a close friend on the phone, occasionally the conversation is cut short. A potty accident, a spastic dog, or an urgent homework question might leave you saying, "I'm sorry, I really have to go. I'll talk to you later."

Remember that prayer is simply a conversation with Jesus who wants to be closer to you than your closest friend. He desires to listen to you, to talk to you, and to spend time with you, but He certainly understands if your time gets cut short!

If today's prayer isn't working, know that you can always try again later!

PRAYER IS A JOURNEY

Just like any relationship, your relationship with Christ has ebbs and flows that move with the seasons of your life. Your prayer life does not need to be perfect today. Simply consider where your relationship with Jesus is today and work on taking one step closer.


Then, in an hour, a week, a year...

*after the baby is born, or the toddler potty trained,
or the laundry is done, or the math class is passed*

...take another step!

"We must pray to Jesus to get to know him better." Pope Francis





Develop Your **Personal** Prayer Plan

THE WHEN

- *What does your schedule look like right now?*
- *What times of the day are you most rushed or stressed?*
- *What times of the day are you most often relaxed, happy, content?*
- *Are you a morning person or an evening person?*
- *How much time do you spend (on average) watching TV, on the Internet, or on your smartphone?*

It can be challenging to find time to pray when you have a family. Carving time out of your busy schedule will not only help you better manage the stress of family life, it will foster a love for Christ in your children as well. Each family is different, so try not to compare yourself to another family. The time you find needs to fit your life, your schedule, your family.

Maybe you can get up 5 minutes earlier in the morning. Maybe you can find 15 minutes after dinner. Maybe you have a 20 minute drive to take the kids to school. What will work for you, for your family, and for your life?

List two different times of the day you could find 5 minutes to pray:

1. _____
2. _____

THE WHERE

When you are trying to establish a good habit, it is helpful to carve out a definite physical space dedicated to it. If you are trying to get more exercise, it is easier to do if you have a space for the bicycle or the weight machine - or even a gym. When you go to that space, you intend to exercise and are motivated to exercise. Setting aside a specific space for your prayer is one way you can stay motivated to follow your plan.

Your prayer space could be in the corner of a bedroom, an empty closet, a dedicated coffee table, a porch or patio - even the bathroom! List two spaces in or around your home that are quiet and as free from interruption as possible (stay away from a chair/couch/bed where you generally watch TV, work, craft/sew, or sleep).

1. _____
2. _____

Now identify the items below that you already have that help you to pray:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>candles</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>a Bible</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>a comfortable chair</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>prayer or devotional books</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>a bookshelf or table</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>pen/paper/journal</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>religious art or statues</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>holy water</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>a cross or crucifix</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>rosary</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>peaceful and/or sacred music</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>other</i> _____ |

THE HOW

Use the Prayer Styles Survey to help you identify the 'how.' Which forms of prayer are you most comfortable with? Which ones are most meaningful for you? Which ones stand out to you as the most effective?

Which ones would you be interested in learning more about or trying for the first time?
Which ones would you be willing to try again?

DRAFT YOUR PLAN

My daily personal prayer time will be: _____

My dedicated prayer space will be: _____

I will have these prayer aids available: _____

During my prayer time I will:

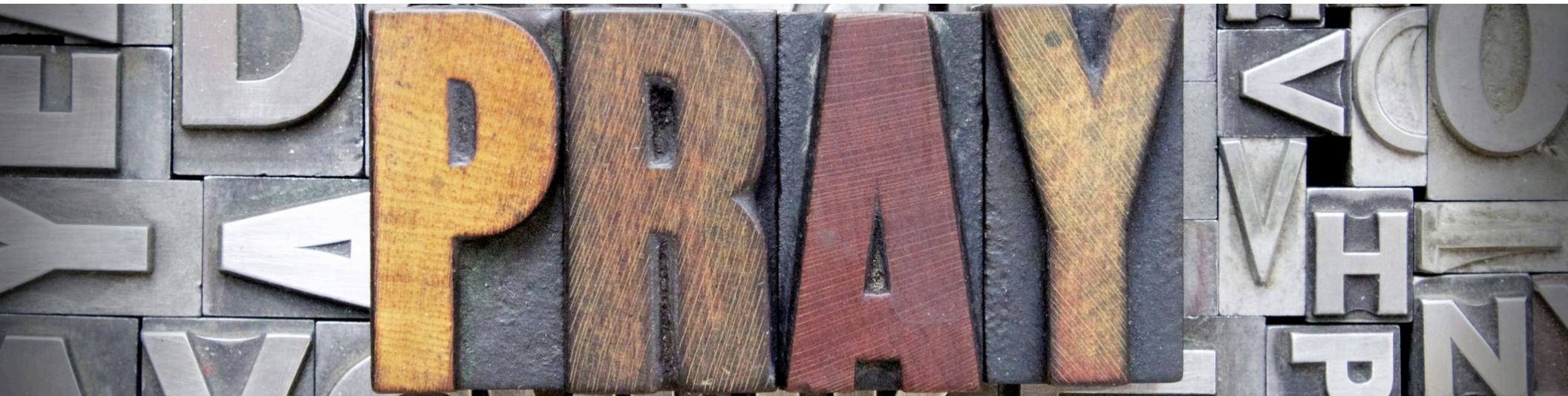
*Consider all of the ACTS types of prayer
(Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication)*

I will attend Mass (how often?) _____

I will go to confession (how often?) _____

Unless you begin your prayer routine within the next 5 days, the likelihood of following through is slim. Take out your schedule now and schedule one hour in which you will gather, purchase, prepare or display anything needed to implement your prayer plan

List the preparation steps you need to take:





Develop Your Family Prayer Plan

SET YOUR SCHEDULE

Just like any other important event, your family prayer time needs to be included on your schedule and protected. If you use a calendar, consider creating an appointment with the family several times per week - even if that appointment is at dinner, before bed, etc.

As a couple, we will pray together *(How Often? What day(s)? What time?)*

Where will you meet for prayer?

As a family, we will pray together *(How Often? What day(s)? What time?)*

Where will you meet for prayer?

TAKE THE TIME TO ADD THESE APPOINTMENTS TO YOUR CALENDARS

JUMP START PRAYERS

Adapted from Drive Faith Home Prayer@Home Campaign

Silent Prayers: The easiest way to start family prayer is to pray silently together. Make the sign of the cross and discuss what you are praying for. Then join hands and then bow quietly. End with a memorized prayer.

Memorized Prayers: Memorized prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, etc) can be easy and non-threatening ways to encourage everyone to participate in prayer out loud. If everyone does not know the prayer, print copies to keep in your prayer space. For pre-readers, Mom or Dad can say the prayer one sentence at a time and the children can repeat it.

Sentence Prayers: Take turns allowing each person who is comfortable doing so to pray a very short, one sentence prayer such as "Please heal Uncle Paul." "Thank you for giving Troy a new friend." "I'm sorry for losing my temper with everyone earlier today."

High/Low Prayers: Have each person quickly share the high point and low point of their day. Then hold hands and give thanks for the high and ask for help with the low.

Fill-in-the-Blank Prayers: Use these starters to guide and focus family prayer times. For example, the following starter lines can be used...God, I love You because... Thank You God for...God, please help...God, I'm sorry for...

Express your love for God

Adoration

Admit your mistakes and
flaws to God.

Contribution

Tell God you are grateful for
His blessings

Thanksgiving

Ask God to help you and
others

Supplication

OTHER FAMILY PRAYER IDEAS

Adapted from Drive Faith Home Prayer@Home Campaign

Prayer Board: Buy a dry erase board to keep near the dinner table or in the prayer space. Use it to keep track of intentions the family is praying for and prayers of thanksgiving.

Recipe Prayer Cards: Keep a recipe box and cards on the table so that when concerns are discussed, they can be captured on a card. You might want to create a section for answered prayers to keep as a reminder of God's goodness.

Family Prayer Journal: Keep a journal and pencil in the prayer space and allow any family member to record written prayers. Family members can pick up the journal during their own personal prayer time and join their spouse, child or parent praying for the same concerns.

Mealttime: Briefly give thanks for the food before you eat, then wait until everyone has eaten to have an extended family time of prayer.

Bedtime: The first person in the family to go to bed (usually the youngest) alerts everyone else that it is the end of day, thus time for family prayer together.

Blessing: Keep holy water near the door to your prayer space. End each time of prayer by having Dad dip a finger in holy water and trace the cross on the forehead of each member of the family blessing them saying, "May the Lord bless you." Invite Mom or a child to bless Dad.

Drive time: As you start the engine, pause for a brief prayer together asking God to go with you and invite everyone to pray a sentence prayer for any concern.

Mirror prayers: Using a dry erase marker, write a list of prayer concerns on the bathroom mirrors so that all remember to pause and pray after brushing their teeth.

WHEN SOMEONE IS TRAVELING

Even when a member (or more) of your family is on the road, you can participate in family prayer by phone. You might also consider sending a text message or email saying "I am praying this for you right now ..."

THE NUDGE

Give everyone permission to "nudge" one another back on track during the inevitable seasons when your prayer routine wanes. Be open to reminders from your wife, husband or child, and resist the temptation to become defensive or defeated.

YOUR FAMILY PLAN

As a couple, during our prayer time we will:

As a family, during our prayer time we will:

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

Unless you start your family prayer routine within 5 days of creating it, the likelihood of following through is slim. End your planning session by scheduling one hour in which you will gather, purchase, prepare or display anything needed to implement any part of your family prayer plan

List the preparation steps you need to take:

From Burning Hearts Disciples

Download a FREE copy of one of the the Burning Hearts Disciples Resource Guides today.

www.burningheartsdisciples.org/resource-guides.html

Visit us on the web for more great resources and suggestions for developing your personal and family prayer plans.



www.burningheartsdisciples.org



Burning Hearts Disciples



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PRAYER RESOURCE GUIDE

Whether your prayer is formal or informal, verbal or nonverbal, active or contemplative, the suggestions in this Resource Guide will renew your prayer life by establishing and deepening your relationship with Jesus Christ and His Holy Church.

The Resource Guide is broken down by level and by resource type (Print, Audio, Video, Web). The cost of the resources vary, but many are free!

Includes: Understanding Prayer, Praying with Children, and resources for all levels: Emerging, Moderate, Strong/High, and Family



LECTIO DIVINA RESOURCE GUIDE

Prayer is communication with God, but often it is a one way conversation. Especially in today's busy and noisy world, it can be difficult to calm our hearts and minds enough to be able to hear God speaking to us. Rest assured, He is speaking to you!

The Scriptures are one of the easiest and clearest places to hear God speaking. The resources in this Guide can help you dive into a new level of prayer - into a deeper relationship with God. Our prayer is that you can experience true encounter with the Lord in His Word, and that this encounter transforms you.

Includes: How To Guide, Materials Needed, Tips, Praying Scripture with Children, and More!