



MAY 2014

Purposeful Parenting
Connecting Church and Family
Deut.6:7

Prayer

Make it a family pursuit

"Countless people pray far more than they know. Often they have such a "stained-glass" image of prayer that they fail to recognize what they are experiencing as prayer and so condemn themselves for not praying." -Richard Foster

If you're a type A people pleaser like me then maybe you read Foster's quote and actually gave a small sigh of relief. We all would agree that prayer is an important spiritual discipline for us to practice and model for our children. But as with any discipline, it takes work, focus, commitment and more often than not, we can get tangled up in roadblocks and obstacles that keep us from having a meaningful prayer life and passing that on to our kids. Here are some excuses that I've identified in my life over the years. Maybe you see yourself echoed in some of these.

I'm going to mess up.

When I set out to do something I want to do it right and I want to do it well. Just like most of parenting, I've had to learn that when it comes to praying, I just need to be ok with things not being perfect. I'm going to be tired one day, somebody is going to not close their eyes, and inevitably somebody is going to say "But I don't want to". **Just go ahead and embrace the chaos of figuring this out as you go. You don't have to pray perfectly for your kids to learn the importance of prayer.**

Things are so crazy right now.

If you have small children like me, finding a time when the house is quiet enough to focus is a challenge. I remember staring at the clock, willing it to be nap time so I could plop down in my big comfy chair for just a few quiet moments of reading and praying. Honestly, this is where I am. Two kids - one about to start kindergarten (!), a husband with a new job, a house on the market, and no "next house" pretty much makes me feel like I'm in crazy town most of the day. These days, most of my times in prayer are happening while I mop the floors - again - but they still press the reset just as well as they did in that big comfy chair. **Pray as you clean, as you shower, as you drive. Do it when you can. Don't wait for the perfect moment (because we all know how often those come around!). Find ways to keep things in front of you - index cards in the car, write with dry erase on the bathroom mirror, notes on your phone...**

I'm never alone.

This goes along with the excuse above but if I'm not alone and I feel like I really need to pray, then I just bring the kids into it. There have been plenty of times when I probably wish I could have had a quieter place to pray but then I would have missed out on an opportunity to connect with them. Or, when I'm stuck in the car and really wish I could be using my time more efficiently

doing something else, that's the perfect time to pray together. Use moments in the car and at the dinner table when you aren't alone (and have a captive audience) to pray with your kids. Use prayer cards, pray through Operation World for kids.

The kids are too little to really get it.

This past week, my son saw a certain happy meal toy that he really (really, really) wanted. He was given the option to earn money to buy it, so he worked hard until he finally had enough to go get it. He's 3 and not a big talker but that night he said he wanted to pray. With his eyes squeezed shut he said Dear Jesus, thank you for my Spider-Man mask! Amen! He opened his eyes and looked at me with a bigger smile than when he got the silly 69 cent toy to begin with. His heart was so full of joy and gratitude and he wanted to tell Jesus about it. He does get it. Another moment as a mom that I realized that I could learn a thing or two from the little ones. **Keep it simple but give them opportunities to pray and guide them in how to pray.** They're never too young to hear you thanking God and praying over them and for others.

Maybe your season of life sounds more like: **My teenager doesn't care or it's awkward** (Open up lines of communication by using a prayer journal placed where anybody in the family can write and read about family prayer requests and praises) or **I don't see my kid every day** (Tuck a note in their stuff next time or mail a note. Let them know that even when you're not together, you never stop praying).

*"Prayer does not equip us for the greater work. Prayer is the greater work."
-Oswald Chambers*

Prayer is the greater work. Let's put away the excuses and stop worrying on the end result and enjoy the journey and process.

-Joy Stoner, Mosaic Preschool & Kindergarten Director

Family Tool Box

Resources for your family on prayer

Books

[What Happens When I Talk to God?](#) - encourages children to develop the life-changing practices of talking to God every day and explains prayer in easy-to-understand ways.

[While They Are Sleeping](#) - 12 character traits to pray for the children you love.

[Creative Family Prayer Times](#) - 52 fun ways to pray together.

[Two Hearts Praying as One](#) - Dennis and Barbara Rainey, founders of FamilyLife®, help couples establish the important daily habit of praying together.

Articles

[10 Easy Steps to Praying with Your Child](#) - simple guidelines to lead your child in developing an independent prayer life.

[The Power of Praying for Your Children](#) - lessons learned about prayer for children as they enter adolescence.

[All They Could Do Was Pray](#) - Parents wait for years for a prodigal son to come to God.

Products

[Lifting My Family in Prayer](#) - prayer cards to guide you in praying for your spouse, your kids, and yourself. The cards include specific prayers and verses.

What's Happening?

Calendar of Events: May-June

May 3: Next Gen, junior high students worship with families

May 10: Parent/Child Dedication, 5pm and 6:45pm

May 10: Parent Quarterly Service, 5pm and 8pm

May 14: End of Year Townhouse Party, 6:30pm-8:30pm, Kiefer barn-Bentonville

May 17: Autism Training Conference, 9:00am-2:30pm in the Lodge. [Register](#)

May 24: Outdoor Baptism & Extravahoopla, 5pm only, Family Service: no classes

June 7: Next Gen, junior high students worship with families

June 14: Promotion Night, includes all children and students

Stay Connected



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Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

- Deuteronomy 6:7