

## Family Prayer

*Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

At the very heart of the Christian life lies communication with God through prayer. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." When you were a child, was engaging with God through prayer a part of your family life? While many adults must make a concerted effort to spend regular time in prayer, our hope for the next generation is that prayer will become a regular habit, a reflex reaction, something they do naturally and instinctively as a product of experiencing it from a very young age and having it become part of who they are.

How do we begin to develop a life of prayer for our family? First, establish a routine prayer time. We all need routine. Routine is what helps us remember what is important and to stay consistent. We must establish a time to talk to God every day. Secondly, be intentional about looking for spontaneous opportunities to pray throughout the day. Perhaps even more important than having an established prayer time is taking advantage of life opportunities that arise which remind us that God is our constant strength and steady presence. When we turn to God throughout the day we are reminded that He is truly with us at all times and is always available to His children.

Everyone learns and processes information in different ways. In an effort to engage our children in prayer, offer various examples that may tap into their different learning styles. For example, children who learn visually will love praying for family, friends, and missionaries as you flip through a photo album or look at a map together. Auditory learners may enjoy reading prayers from the Bible or a devotional book aloud in unison or alternating sentences. They may also like to incorporate songs and praises to the Lord through music. Children who learn primarily through tactile methods will enjoy drawing pictures of things to pray about. How about offering up a prayer to God with each shot of a basketball into the hoop? Be creative as you look for tactile prayer ideas. For example, play with clay as you pray. The clay does not necessarily have to create an image of the prayer; simply having something tactile will help with children's attention span. God will meet you wherever you are. Reach out to Him as a family and invite Him in.

### **Resources:**

*You Can Change the World* and the companion volume *You Too Can Change the World: Helping Families Pray for the World* by Daphne Spraggett with Jill Johnstone (OM Publishing)

*Teach Us to Pray: Scripture-Centered Family Worship Through the Year* by Lora Copley and Elizabeth Vander Haagen (CICW Books)

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