

Becoming Intentional About Prayer@ Home

7-5-2

Begin by committing to Prayer@home
using the 7-5-2 plan...

- 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 and bedtime
- 2** Pray at least two times a week with your spouse.

Try one or more of the ideas in this brochure to be more intentional at home.

Why Pray at home?

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

- Build a life-long, thriving marriage
- Strengthen the 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.

Why don't we pray at home?

Check each of the following common reasons that apply in your situation:

- I feel awkward praying out loud with others –even my family.
- Our family schedule is so hectic we never seem to get to it.
- There is relational tension, so we don't want to pray together.
- I think my spouse would resist or dismiss the idea.

The following pages contain ideas to help you overcome each of these obstacles to begin a prayer@home routine in your family.

Overcoming Obstacles

Tips as you encounter obstacles to the prayer@home habit:

- **Schedule:** Just like any other important event, prayer@home needs to be included on the schedule and protected. If you use a calendar (whether paper or computerized), consider creating an appointment with the family several times per week – even if that appointment is at dinner, before bed, etc.
- **Travel:** Even when on the road, you can participate in family prayer by phone or Skype. You might also consider sending a text message or email saying “I am praying this for you right now....”
- **Tension:** Confession (acknowledging one’s failures) in prayer can make it easier to resolve tension as family members humble themselves before God in the hearing of one another.
- **Partial Family Prayer:** If a spouse or child is unwilling to participate in group prayer, the rest of the family can still enjoy and benefit from the experience. Don’t allow their lack of participation to create tension. Simply do what you can as you are able without making them feel awkward or isolated.
- **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. Accept the “nudge” and begin again.

Jump Start Prayers

Helpful ways to jump start a prayer@home routine:

- **Silent Prayers:** The easiest way to start family prayer is praying silently together. Agree on a prayer list, join hands and then bow silently. As you become more comfortable with the process, add sentence prayers to your routine.
- **Sentence Prayers:** Take turns allowing each person who is comfortable doing so to pray a very short, one sentence prayer like “Please heal Uncle Paul.” Or “Thank you for giving Troy a new friend.” Or “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 pre-written language 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...

Prayer Reminder Tools

Ideas to make your prayer@home routine easier and more meaningful:

- **Prayer Board:** Buy a dry erase board to keep near the dinner table or on the bathroom mirror and use it to keep track of items the family is praying for together.
- **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.
- **Thanksgiving Jar:** Keep a large mason jar with a stack of paper slips in a visible location to write down and keep reminders of answered prayer throughout the year. On Thanksgiving Day, empty the jar to reflect upon and give thanks for God's goodness the prior months.
- **Family Prayer Journal:** Keep a journal and pencil someplace in the house where any family member can record written prayers. Other family members can pick up the journal during their own prayer time and join their spouse, child or parent praying for the same concerns.
- **Prayer Card Basket:** Rather than throw away Christmas and birthday cards, thank you notes, or party invitations received during the year, place them in a basket. Remove one each meal time as a reminder to pray for that person or family.

When to Pray Together

Existing family activities or special occasions to leverage for prayer@home opportunities:

- **Meal Time:** 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 time for the end of day prayer together.
- **Wake up:** Before the first person heads out the door, pray together about the upcoming activities of the day.
- **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.
- **Special Occasions:** Anniversaries, birthdays, first day of school, first date, school test, job interview, or trip to camp can trigger special occasion prayers – especially with teens who encounter many “firsts” to lift before the Lord together.
- **Walks:** Taking a walk together is the ideal time to pray – or pause at the end to pray about matters that came up during your walk.
- **Mirror prayers:** Using a dry erase marker, write a list of prayer concerns on the child's bathroom mirror so they remember to pause and pray after brushing teeth.

What to Say

For those who would feel more comfortable with pre-scripted guidance, feel free to pray aloud together using the following language:

- **Praying for Perspective:** Almighty God, we recognize that you are our creator and provider. We also acknowledge we are weak and need you. Help us depend on you today as we (describe specific activities tied to work, school, challenges, etc.)
- **Confession Prayer:** Lord, you have promised to forgive those who confess their sins. We come before you in humility today acknowledging our own unworthiness and our many failures (pause as each person silently confesses his/her own sins and failures). Now we ask that you give us the courage to apologize and forgive each other when needed to keep harmony in this home.
- **Request Prayer:** Father, you are the giver of all good gifts. We ask for your goodness today as we lift the following requests to you (take turns offering one sentence prayers for each request).
- **The Lord's Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread (*insert sentence prayers about family needs/concerns*). Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us (*pause as each person silently confesses*). And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (*insert sentence prayers about fears, worries, temptations, etc.*). For to you belong the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayer@home Action Plan

1. **Commit to Pray.** Begin by committing to prayer@home as a habit using the 7-5-2 plan.
2. **Select a Time.** Make a note of the days and time slots for prayer as a couple and/or family.
Examples: Couple: Pray for 10 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the end of our walk together. Family: Monday and Thursday prayer at the end of dinner and each evening we will use "first to bed" strategy for bedtime prayers.
Our Prayer@home days will be (Circle days)
Sun – Mon – Tues – Weds – Thurs – Fri - Sat
3. **Choose a Strategy:** Jot down your thoughts on how to best guide the content of family prayers.
Examples: Couple: We will use the "Fill-in-the-Blank" guide to focus our prayers. Family: We will use "High/Low" at dinner and "sentence prayers" at bedtime.
We will use the following strategies: _____

4. **Make Preparations:** Unless you begin your Prayer@home routine in the next five 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 the ideas listed above.

List the preparation steps you need to take:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____