

Three Steps You Can Take Today to Boost Your Family's Prayer Life

"We should pray about this" my 14 year old said, and he bowed his head.

It wasn't the first time that I had heard him express a desire to pray. I'd seen him join hands with his friends around a flagpole, and have seen him choose to pray during prayer meeting before our congregation. I know he meets every school day morning with a group of friends before classes begin and offer their days to the Father. My mama heart fills with joy when I hear my children express a desire or need to pray. While they are certainly not perfect, because I've corrected his attitude a zillion times, I see with eyes of faith the people of prayer they are becoming.

Hear me say this. We are not perfect. I'm not doing it all right, but this I can tell you with certainty that it is possible to make prayer a part of the fabric of your home, grooves cut so deep in our family life that our children breathe prayer. When they are frightened, they pray, and when they are victorious, they pray. Can this be a reality?

I know it can because I've watched it grow in our home.

Here are the three steps I've taken, that you can take too:

First, **express the desire.**

"Lord, I come asking for You to make me a woman of prayer. Would You help me learn to pray and create in me an appetite for prayer? I need You, and my family needs You. Train my heart and mind to seek You and cultivate in my home a hunger for prayer. I surrender my feelings of ineptness and ask for the Holy Spirit to give me courage. Thank you for the invitation to approach you with our needs."

This is a "Yes and Amen" kind of prayer that God desires to answer.

Second, **create prayer grooves.**

There is power in the repetitive rhythm of an action.

My parents live out of state, and people have always marveled at how I could drive twenty-one hours from West Michigan to Austin, Texas, alone with my four young children. I often tell them, "We just find the groove in the road, put our tires in it, and drive." Similarly, we can create prayer habits, or grooves, that with repetition become patterns.

It's easy for us to buck the idea of ritual prayers because we believe that passionate prayer lives always involve spontaneity. We live in a culture that bucks self-discipline, but creating prayer grooves in your life creates opportunity to build consistency.

For example, what if you began committing your day to the Lord every time your alarm rang or at least as you pour your first cup of coffee? Perhaps as you drive past the local school you could pray that God would allow truth to be taught there and for the faculty to have wisdom that day. One of my friends has an app on her phone that rings every two hours prompting her

to pray for students in her small group and her nephews and nieces. Now that's using technology to glorify God.

One of my deep prayer grooves is to begin any study of the Word with a time of prayer. This means when my hands open the Scriptures, I ask for the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom, insight, and to guide me into truth. I need His leadership and insight as I have my personal devotions, as I prepare lessons, and as I teach.

Another prayer groove that runs deep in my life happens at bedtime. If I lay down with my husband and we haven't prayed for our family, we can't sleep. Eleven years ago my husband told me that he'd heard Dennis Rainey say that the divorce rate of couples who pray together daily is virtually zero. With a simple commitment to prayer, we could almost ensure we would stay together. This rhythm has not become dull with the repetitive nature but rather a time of sweetness and unity between us.

There's something very powerful about scheduling prayer into your days. It reminds me that I need God to work, but it also alleviates the guilt associated with prayerlessness. At the end of the day, I'm praying about the things that matter most to me and I have filled my day with moments of seeking Him.

Third, **pray scripture.**

Praying words from the Bible gives us confidence because we are using God's words. Begin with the Psalms or Proverbs and make a note of times when the writer talks to the Lord. When they say something you would like to express, write that down and turn it into a prayer. Their words and petitions for wisdom, direction and purity have become my words now. In this way, ***I have a script to pray when I can't think of words to say.***

You CAN step past the trap of not knowing how today, sweet friend. Be brave enough to be transparent before your children and the Lord and share your heart of prayer for your home. It can be a reality. I promise.

Is it time to ask for the Lord to create inside of you a passion to pray? How would implementing the ideas above help you model your prayer life to your children?