



15 Ways to Make Prayer a Natural Part of Family Life

Kim Butts

1. Help your children to become aware of answered prayer.

Tell them about the times in your life when God has answered your prayers. Encourage them to share when God answers their prayers—even if His answer isn't what they wanted or expected. When you have other believers—especially missionaries and full-time Christian workers—in your home, ask them to tell you about answered prayers they have experienced. Point out God's answers to your children's prayers, even the smallest requests.

2. Help your children to see the beauty of God's creation and thank Him for it.

Don't miss opportunities to appreciate His handiwork around you. Take time to point out sunsets and beautiful flowers . . . and thank God for them right then.

3. Whenever you see or hear about someone in need, take time to pray about it with your children.

It could be something on the news or in the paper, or something you come across during the course of your day. Teaching them to pray when they see an accident or when you pass a homeless person could have a lasting influence not only on your children, but on those who are prayed for.

4. Wrap family traditions or events in special times of prayer.

For example, lay hands on the person with a birthday and bless him or her; thank the Lord for two things that you love about her, etc. At Thanksgiving, go around the table and have each family member pray about what he or she is most thankful for over the past year.

5. Pray blessings over your children.

Lay hands on them at bedtime or at another time when they are hurting in some way, and pray scriptural blessings over them. Numbers 6:24–26 is a good one to memorize: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

6. Teach your children to prayerfully put on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10–18) at the beginning of each new day.

Each of us needs to be aware that we are in a battle and that God has provided us with some very important equipment with which to protect ourselves and fight. This can be done as a family, but don't ritualize it or make it a legalistic thing.

7. Have family devotions and prayer time.

While any time is good, early mornings before everyone goes separate ways is probably the best time. This will remind children that God will be with them throughout the day.

8. Put together a family prayer journal.

Place each family member's picture in it, as well as pictures of your pastor and his family, relatives, unsaved friends, and neighbors. Pray through the album together, and encourage one another to pray individually on a daily basis for those represented.

9. Teach children to keep a personal prayer journal.

Here they can record personal prayer requests, praises, and answers to prayer.

10. Develop a missionary prayer notebook.

Place prayer cards or pictures of missionaries your family and/or church supports in a three-ring binder with plastic page protectors, colorful paper, etc. Include pages with pockets for recent newsletters, prayer needs, e-mail messages, etc. Pray through the notebook on a regular basis. Help your children make the connection between prayer and saving the lost. Pray together that the Lord of the harvest (Mt. 9:38) would send workers into His harvest fields.

11. Adopt a people group to pray for.

Perhaps this could be one of the unreached groups of the 10/40 Window. Pray for your people group daily, research its needs, and be open to what God will do through your family. To adopt a people group, contact Adopt-a-People Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 1795, Colorado Springs, CO 80901-1795. There is also a wonderful video that teaches children about the 10/40 Window called The 10/40 Window for Children. It is available from Joey and Fawn Parish, 6673 Sora Street, Ventura, CA 93003.

12. Develop a family prayer calendar each month.

Take turns, or do it together. Put each family event or activity on the calendar, so it can be prayed for. Wouldn't it be great to have the entire family pray for a child to do his best at the track meet or that Mom would meet someone who needed to hear about Jesus at her meeting?

13. Go on a prayer walk in your neighborhood.

Pray for all the families that live around you. For help on how to do this, obtain the book Prayerwalking by Steve Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick (Creation House) or the video Prayerwalking for Kids, available from Joey and Fawn Parish (see address above).

14. Adopt a leader to pray for.

The objective of this National Day of Prayer Task Force program is to have families adopt a local, state, or national political leader. The family commits to pray for and communicate with this leader for at least one year. Kits are available from NDOP at (800) 444-8828.

15. Participate as a family in prayer events.

Join with other believers for the National Day of Prayer (first Thursday in May), PrayUSA!, Praying Through the Window, March for Jesus, etc. Encourage your junior- or senior-high school children to take part in See You at the Pole.