

Family Prayer Resources

Why pray with our children?

God's people have always been people to call on his name in prayer, and this is no less true today: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thess 5:16-17). If Christian parents are to bring up our children 'in the training and instruction of the Lord' (Eph 6:4), then teaching our children to pray is an indispensable part of helping our children grow up to maturity in Christ – helping them helping them to, with all of us, 'approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need' (Heb 4:16).

Where do we start?

Start Small

It's pretty much impossible to get up from your lounge and then run a marathon with no training whatsoever (or so I hear, having never run a marathon myself!). In the same way, many well-meaning Christian families come unstuck when they are convicted that they should be praying with their children, and then try to jump straight from never praying together to a 6 hour prayer marathon!

I suggest that you start with small, realistic, and achievable steps. If you don't pray together at all, try doing so once a week. If you're doing ok once a week, perhaps try to add in a second time each week etc. Consider (realistically) where you're at with family prayers at the moment, and then work together to figure out what 1 small step in the right direction might look like. This isn't a crazy point to bring your children into the discussion for their input too.

Attach it to something you already do together

Forming habits is easiest when you attach it to something that is already part of your routine. Praying together as a family is no different. If you eat dinner together every night, or have breakfast together every morning, maybe they would be good times to start praying together as well? If you read bedtime stories with your children, perhaps you could pray as part of the bedtime routine? If you spend time in the car regularly driving to and from school, perhaps those could be good times to pray together?

Keep at it!

Forming habits takes time, and consistent effort. Try not to get discouraged if it's hard, or if you fail in an attempt. Keep it up! Or try another way of going about it. And of course, there is so much help and encouragement out there in our Church. If you're really struggling you might ask other families at Church how they do with family prayers, and ask them to pray for you as you work at praying with your children.

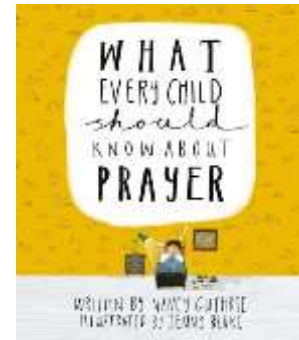
Resources

‘Everything a Child Should Know About Prayer’ by Nancy Guthrie.

This great little book goes through, in language accessible to children, what prayer is, how and why we should pray, and the things we can pray about. There is a Bible verse for each topic, and a prayer for children to make their own.

Buy it here:

<https://reformers.com.au/products/9781911272878-what-every-child-should-know-about-prayer-guthrie-nancy-brake-jenny>



Some ways to pray with children:

1. *‘Popcorn Prayer’*

When doing ‘popcorn prayer’ each member of the family can ‘pop up’ to pray a short, one sentence prayer. It’s especially fun if you do it while sitting, and then the person praying jumps up to say their prayer! One sentence is usually accessible for a lot of people, and can be a good starting point.

Eg “Dear God, thanks for school today. Amen.”

2. *Prayer Calendars*

Many great Christian Organisations (CMS, BCA, Anglican Aid, Compassion etc) will publish prayer calendars, with prayer points to pray each day. These can be really helpful if you find yourselves getting stuck with ideas for prayer. You can also create your own prayer calendar for your family:

e.g. Mondays – Pray for friends to come to know Jesus

Wednesdays – pray for our Mission partners

3. *A.C.T.S.*

A.C.T.S. prayers stand for *Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication*. Using methods like this can be helpful for encourage deepen prayers beyond the family’s immediate needs.

4. *Memorising Prayers*

There’s a lot of benefit in memorising prayers together as a family. Our Anglican Prayerbook has heaps of wonderful ones (though they can be a bit wordy at times). You might start with ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ which Jesus taught us (Matt 6:9-13). You could start by saying a line, and get the kids to copy you, and just keep at it till you’ve all learned it off by heart.

5. *Incidental Prayers*

One powerful way we can model following Jesus to our children is through incidental prayer. When something comes up that is worrying or frustrating, lead your children in praying there and then about it. E.g. your child is anxious about giving a speech at school today – say a short prayer with them about it before dropping them off.