

Back to School



... Blessing
or Burden ?

Make Time ... and Pray

Whether you have kids in school or not, this time of year has everyone shuffling about, being pulled in many different directions.

You've waited all summer for the kids to be back in school, but now you find that you have less free time than you had when they were home. There's new school information to keep up with, constant requests for you to volunteer, your kids are involved with a variety of activities, school lunches need to be made, family members need to be shuttled here and there, and everyone's emotions are running high. Now is the perfect time to step back ... and pray.

Have you thought about putting together a prayer plan at the start of the school year - a plan that includes all the things you and each member of your family are committing to for the year? A prayer plan not only helps you keep everything in perspective, it seeks the Master Planner's input in everything you do. Here are a few ways to begin:

Pray With One Another. Have all family members meet regularly (daily, weekly, or monthly) to discuss what improvements they can pray for in themselves and each other. In addition to everyone knowing what to ask for in prayer for others, each family member hears the needs of others and can now seek out ways in which to help them meet their prayer goals as they each go about their day. As you continue to meet, each person should review and modify their needs as situations change, being thankful for full or partial successes.

Read Ephesians 4:25-32.

Let God Handle Your "To Do" List.

Everyone is busy these days. We rely on scribbled "to do" lists, post-it notes, daily planners, electronic organizers, computer calendars, and PDAs to lead us through our day. We schedule and fill our time ... days, weeks, even months in advance - always trying to squeeze more in and never accounting for unexpected emergencies that inevitably come up nor even for quiet moments with family. And what about prayer? Do you set time aside to pray? No? Okay, try this! When you review your "to do" list at the start of each day, instead of saying "This is what I have to do today," say "Lord, help me accomplish these tasks today." And then list each one, in prayer. Let God help you get through your list each day. As you check items off, pray, "Thank you, Lord, for helping me do that." With Jesus, you are not alone.

Read Proverbs 15: 22-33.

Create A Prayer List.

Consider how each family member (including yourself) needs to grow during the course of the coming school year in the areas of health, spiritual growth, dreams, struggles, and joys. Write these needs down and use them as the basis of your private prayer for your family throughout the year, asking God to help and guide each family member grow in each of these areas as needed. Be specific. Be sure to objectively observe how God responds to your prayers ... and adjust your requests as needed. At the end of the school year, review your original prayer list, noting where growth has occurred. In addition to helping you see the power of prayer, you also allow yourself an opportunity to observe changes in family members over the course of a year instead of just allowing life to pass you all by.

Read Proverbs 27:18-27.

Do You Have Time For Everything?

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

There is an appointed time for everything,
and a time for every affair under the heavens.
A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to tear down, and a time to build.
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them;
a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away.
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to be silent, and a time to speak.
A time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.

Finding time for yourself doesn't just happen. You must discover what is stealing away the precious minutes from your day, hours from your week, days from your month, etc. Remove those time-stealers and then fill that time with more meaningful activities - those things you didn't think you had time for. Remember, as it says in the Bible, there *IS* a time for everything.

Schedule Family Meals. Don't let your home become a fast-food restaurant where eating on the run is the norm. While it's great to be involved, family time should be treated at least as valuable as anything else on the schedule. Meals aren't simply about filling your stomach with food - but spending time with other family members. God has a plan for each of us, and as a family He brought each member of your family together for a reason. How can you fulfill His plan for your family if you don't spend time with one another? If dinner is a difficult time to get everyone together, consider a weekend breakfast, brunch, or Sunday lunch. When and what you eat is not as important as being together, talking and sharing.

Read Jeremiah 29:11-14a.

Encourage Your Children. While you may be tempted to do everything in your power to keep your children safe and help them to succeed, you must give your children the freedom to explore the world around them on their own and should they come up short, they will learn to cope with failure. Encourage your children to strive to do their best and achieve all they can, reminding them to acknowledge God's part in anything they achieve. You need to let your child grow according to the plan God has prepared, not simply what you want for them. *Read Proverbs, Chapters 1 & 22.*

God Made Your Children Unique. Each child is different and your approach to them needs to be individually tailored to each as well. While you may see opportunities to make comparisons, doing so may spur feelings of favoritism and sibling rivalry between them. Every child is precious to God, so treasure the unique children with whom you have been blessed.

Read Psalm 139:1-18.

30 Minutes To Pray. Everyone's life is busy and hectic. At the end of the day, you may find yourself in front of the television watching a favorite scheduled game show or a sitcom to unwind from your stresses. How much more rewarding would spending that same 30 minutes in prayer be? The objective is the same - to release you from the day's stresses, but rather than taking in more "outside" distractions, put your time in God's hands and your life will become more focused. Prayer refreshes and energizes you, leaving you not just rested but with a sense of calm and peace that only He can bring. *Read Matthew 11:28-30.*

Set Priorities. No one is perfect and no one can do it all. So don't try. If you do, you set yourself up for failure. Instead when faced with an opportunity to participate in something, weigh the value of the task - is it worth the time you will be away from your family? Bring the choices you are faced with to God in prayer, and ask for help in deciding what to do. Then have faith in Him and His plan. If you choose to do something that keeps you away from your kids, be sure they understand the reason for your choice and tell them that you prayed on it.

Read Matthew 6:19-34.

**Spend time rediscovering God.
Refresh and renew yourself ...
and face each day with a smile again!**

**Women's Cornerstone
Corpus Christi Parish**

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