

PARENTING MATTERS:
SPIRITUAL MILESTONES

PRAYER

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

...constant and almost inescapable communication. Facetiming far away family, texting friends, responding to work emails, asking your family about their day, ordering coffee, chatting with the grocery checker, you are always communicating. In the midst of all of the chatter, it's not always easy to make time to connect with God. Prayer is your direct connection to the God who created you. Prayer can happen any time, from any where, about any thing. This milestone is about creating space in your life to prioritize prayer.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PRAYER

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is the act of talking to God and listening for his response. When you pray, you can praise God for who he is, confess your sins to him, thank him for all that is doing, and ask him for help. Prayer is also taking the time to sit in quiet reverence and listen for God's response. God created this direct line to him so that his people could always pursue a deeper and more personal relationship with him. Prayer is making time to speak gratitude, praise, repentance, and requests to God.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT IT?

The Bible lists 650 prayers, about 450 answers to prayers, and 25 times that Jesus himself prays. God created you in his own image, to be in relationship with him (Genesis 1:27). God tells his people that if he is sought in prayer, with humility and repentance, that he will hear each word and offer forgiveness and healing (2 Chronicles 7:14). Jesus outlines how prayer should be done in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), and Paul writes that you can pray on all occasions and with all kinds of prayers (Ephesians 6:18). The Bible is God's clearest way of communicating with his people, and prayer is the best way for you to communicate with him.

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT TO US?

God is not a high up being who is disconnected from humanity, he is a loving, relational, intentional father. Because he cares so deeply for you, he gifted you prayer as a way to talk to him. Prayer is significant because it allows you to praise and thank God for all that he is, and gives you the ability to surrender your worry, anxiety, and pain to him. When you approach God with faith and trust, he hears each prayer and addresses them in his own way and by his own time. Prayer reminds you, each time you do it, that you are not alone, but that you have a God who listens, who cares, and who helps.

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

PRAYING FOR YOUR KIDS

Create space and time to pray for your kids. Pray for them specifically; use their name, their characteristics, their strengths, their struggles. Keep a journal or a list of how you are praying for them so that you can look back and see patterns and growth. Do this privately (or with a spouse), but feel free to share bits and pieces with your kids.

TEACH YOUR KIDS TO PRAY

Be an active part of your child learning to pray. Talk about prayer and encourage them to incorporate it into their lives. Highlight times when they can pray like before a big test, when they're fighting with a friend, when they get a great grade, when they learn something new. This can be a combination of scripture and prayer, and can even just be one or two sentences they repeat in these moments. Make sure you encourage them to pray both in times of struggle and in times of triumph, seeking God's peace and thanking him for working in their life. Check out a few practical ideas for teaching prayer:

> ACTS Prayer:

A - Adore, give God praise and honor for who he is

C - Confess, tell God how you have sinned, ask for forgiveness

T - Thanksgiving, say what you are grateful for in your life and in the world around you

S - Supplication, pray for your needs and the needs of others

> Five Finger Prayer:

Thumb - the closest finger to you, pray for those closest to you

Pointer - the directing finger, pray for those who teach, instruct and heal you

Middle - the tallest finger, pray for the leaders in your life

Ring - the weakest finger, pray for the weak, the sick, the broken

Pinky - the smallest finger, pray for yourself after praying for the others

> Prayer Journal:

Keep a log of what you are praying for. Focus on how your prayers are answered or addressed. Write down praises, sorrows, struggles, and victories.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 7:7-8

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of speaking to you. I praise you for giving me this way to connect with you always. Thank you for hearing my prayers, and for knowing those that I don't speak. Thank you for listening and for caring. Thank you for answering in your perfect time in with all of your awesome wisdom. Help me teach my family what it means to pray. Help them understand the beauty and power of speaking to their Creator. Give us all powerful moments as we seek you. Thank you for letting us speak to you, and for speaking to us each day. Amen.

RESOURCES

The One Year Praying through the Bible for Your Kids
by Nancy Guthrie

A Book of Prayers for Kids: Ways to Talk to God Every Day
by Mel Lawrenz

Parentcue.org - 30 Day Family Prayer Calendar

Focusonthefamily.com - Teaching Kids to Pray

Pinterest.com - How to Pray

