

Praying for your Family

He is God of all grace.

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ... will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:10

I am rich in His grace.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor... 2 Corinthians 8:9

Be sure to teach the families to pray all together - father, mother and children. For the family that prays together stays together, and if they stay together they will love one another as Jesus loves each one of them...I will be praying that the Lord will bring peace into the world through the love of fathers for their families... Mother Teresa

James 5:16 tells us, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." We want our prayers to be effective, but what does it mean to stand "righteous" before God? As a people, it is obvious that all of us fall short of the glory of God which is known in Scripture as Sin. We see so clearly that no one on this earth except Jesus Christ Himself can stand blameless before a just, perfect God. No matter how hard we try, we have no ability to be or become righteous on our own. This is where the Blood of the Cross comes in. We see in

Titus 3:4-8 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

To pray effectively, we need to be fervent and righteous; fervent is to be ongoing or passionate and righteous is to be dependant of the work of the Cross. We also need to grasp the importance of the "fear of the Lord." This is not to be terrified of God in a negative sense, but we need to know and realize how powerful and mighty He is.

Clearly a priority of God's is to preserve the family relationship. God has designed marriage (Genesis 2:18 *The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*) and the family to accomplish His purpose.

Ephesians 5:22-6:4 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church. However,

each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

God's purpose is to glorify Himself by building His eternal kingdom with the children He loves. When the family functions in a sinful world, through the power of God as written in Scripture, it then proclaims the Gospel through lifestyle.

Many see the advancement of technology as enhancing the quality of our businesses and allowing individuals to stay electronically accessible, it has also condensed communication and even lessened the intimacy between individuals and families. Parents and their children find themselves distant from one another emotionally and spiritually. Ultimately, in today's world of text messaging, instant messenger, and handheld email devices - communication within the family unit doesn't often enough communicate with God. Praying families seem rare in today's culture!

Satan is clearly in existence today, as divorce rates climb in both the Christian world and the secular world. Satan's goal is destruction of anything that promotes the Gospel including the emotional and spiritual health of your family. *1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

We need to pray with our families as a family. I am sure that many families rarely participate in activities together, but rather focus their time on TV, or the Computer or even agendas that are different than each other. When we forfeit this privilege to pray with our families for our families, both parents and children lack unity from God through prayer.

As a family, we should pray more than at a meal or bedtime. When your child is disobedient or rebellious, it is a perfect time to pray with them asking God to help them to be faithful to His word in honoring you, their parent. Or if you have sinned in your anger, it is completely okay to ask them to pray with you as you confess your sin against them or a spouse so they can see your true humility. This is when children truly see prayer as a part of faith and not just a ritual done at dinner time or bedtime, it will also encourage them when they see that you are in need of God's help for obedience.

Husbands, your role as a spiritual leader is to be praying for your wife and kids. Pray for her:

- Spirit, that she would be more sensitive to the Lord's leading in her life.
- Mind, that she would hunger and thirst for righteousness that comes from the word.
- Eyes, that she would keep her eyes fixed on the Lord.
- Mouth, that her words and thoughts would be pleasing to the Lord.
- Heart, that she would love the Lord with all of her heart, soul, and mind as well as love others as herself.
- Character, that she would live as one worth more than jewels living as mature and noble character.

Wives, your role is to be the best helpmate to your husband by partnering with him. Prayer is essential to living out what God has called you to be. Pray for his:

- Head, that he would surrender to God as his head and lead you and your family as the head of the household.

- Mind, that he would have a rich experience of knowing Christ with certainty, that his mind would be focused on the wisdom and knowledge that comes from the word of God.
- Eyes, that he would keep himself visually pure and have a healthy perspective of truth in all his endeavors including leading his family.
- Mouth, that he would be bold to speak truth and allow Jesus to be known, but also to be humble and know when he should slow to speak and quick to listen.
- Heart, that he would obey the Lord's commands by loving the Lord with all of his heart, soul, and mind as well as that he would love others as himself. That he would have a gentle compassion for the family like only a father could.
- Character, that he by the Spirit could supernaturally be someone of noble character who many would look up to and would ultimately praise the Father in heaven for.

Prayer for marriages, remember Satan is alive and well, he would love to tear your marriage down. Make a habit to pray together for each other and for your marriage. Praying for your marriage can and possibly should be done with your kids. Pray that:

- Together you will be perfectly united in thought and mind, that there would be no divisions among each other.
- Your marriage would be founded on the word of God and your actions would only build up each other, demonstrating the Gospel in all that you do.
- You would love and serve each other, just as Christ did the church, *Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*
- Every emotion and desire would be satisfied through Christ in each other.
- He/She will compliment other in their God-given roles.
- Neither will grow weary but each other will encourage the other to carry the yoke of Christ.
- Both will give God the Glory for their hearts being turned toward Him.

Parents, married or single should be faithful to lift up their kids in prayer always. It is clear that the Lord Jesus always had a heart for the little ones. Pray for your child(ren) that they:

- Will receive the Love that Jesus offers as a Savior. Pray that they will embrace the truth of the Gospel and live forever with God in His new creation.
- Will commit their lives to Jesus and allow His Spirit to indwell them.
- Will grow to develop a hunger and thirst for righteousness through the word of God.
- That they will through faith develop a character that only a child of God could, that they would desire to live a life worthy of the Gospel.
- Will learn to hate sin and love what God has to offer.
- Will marry a spouse that God would send to them for a marriage partnership and that God would allow them to enter into a marriage that will live and defend the Gospel in all that they do.
- Will Fear the Lord.

The benefits of praying together as a family is immeasurable, we see in *John 15:5 ("I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing")*, that we need the Lord to be an active part of our families. Although, family prayer is effective in creating strength, it is often difficult to find the right times to pray. Often we have the best of intentions but only find conflict of schedules, others might feel inadequate to lead in prayer, but remember growth only happens when you learn.

So be fervent and effective!