

Prayer --- Can It Really Help Build Your Family?

by Moe Becnel

Why Pray?

There were many days when Paige and I had no more emotional strength to continue trying to build our family. The struggles were frequent and intense. We seemed to continually face the same issues over and over. We were ready to give up many times.

But the church in which Paige and I met had given us a strong foundation in the power of prayer. We had been taught about spiritual attacks. Through all the struggles of trying to build this new family, we knew the meaning of this scripture:

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6: 12)

We knew that our fight was not against each other, but against Satan and his army who were trying to divide our marriage and family. Prayer was the sustaining force that brought the breakthrough – the victory– in our lives and in our blended family.

However, when our emotions took over during a conflict, we responded negatively toward one another.

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” (James 4: 1-3)

To summarize this scripture, we lack in our lives, in our relationships, and in our families because we do not ask for help in prayer --- or because we ask for the wrong things with selfish motives.

The real solution to conflicts in families is to retreat from attacking and blaming each other, and to advance in prayer and in God’s Word. Christians so often underestimate the power of prayer. *Prayer has been the overwhelming power that has produced the positive change in our hearts first, and then in our blended family.*

God cherishes your new family! He wants to give you everything you need to build a successful blended family. But you only hear from God and gain His instruction when you spend time in prayer, in communication with Him, seeking His will for you and your family.

How Prayer Works for Your Family

If you need radical change in your life, your marriage, your new family, or your children, you need to radically change your approach to prayer. Insanity has been described as “doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” The same is true of our prayer life. If we pray the same amount of time, with the same lack of zeal, with the same weak sacrifice and the same level of distraction, we cannot and will not experience change.

Pastor Dino Rizzo, Sr. Pastor of Healing Place Church, says, “My whole world looks different when I am on my knees.” This is so true! Prayer causes us to think differently about whatever we are praying about, including other people we are praying for. Spending time in prayer gives you fresh ideas to solve your daily problems.

Here is a four-step process of how prayer works for building relationships:

1. (NEW VIEW) When you *earnestly* pray for your spouse and natural & new children, you will get God’s Heart for those people. Think about that. When you start praying for someone, your attitude toward that person will begin to change. God’s Heart is love! God’s Heart is mercy! God’s Heart is grace! God’s Heart is goodness! God’s Heart is patience! God’s Heart is kindness! God’s Heart is faithfulness! God’s Heart keeps no record of wrong!

As new parents, we often lack a proper perspective of what our spouse or children are really feeling. We need God's Heart to become sensitive to the needs of our family.

2. (NEW ATTITUDE) God's Heart gives you His Compassion for those you have begun to pray for. Throughout the Gospels, we see that Jesus was "*moved with compassion*" just before He performed a miracle. As you gain His Compassion for those in your family, your attitude will change. You will start to see opportunities to make positive change – usually in yourself first. You will begin to see hope where there was no hope.
3. (NEW ACTION) His Compassion will cause you to move toward those (you are praying for) with genuine concern, and a deeper desire for stronger relationships. God's Compassion will move us into action. You will begin to implement the opportunities for positive change. You will begin to extend more love, mercy, grace, goodness, patience, kindness, and faithfulness to ALL family members.
4. (NEW REACTION) Your genuine concern will draw your spouse and family to you. Your new level of concern and action (*created in your prayer time*) for ALL family members will begin to strengthen your relationships, and unify your family. *People will change in response to our changes!* The reaction may not be immediate – your family members may wait to see if your new attitudes and actions are temporary (caused by the pizza you had the night before, or the promotion you got at work last week), or a true, sustained change in your heart.

Teaching Your Children to Pray

Prayer also brings positive results in children. A person is never too young to learn to communicate and fellowship with their Heavenly Father. There is no reason why your children cannot pray with you or for you. They will learn to pray by hearing you and others pray. They will learn to pray by praying.

We exposed our children to prayer at an early age. We attended prayer meetings, to which we brought our children and expected them to pray with us and for us (though we did not expect them to pray for long periods of time). As a result, we have seen our family knit together more through prayer with each other than in anything else we could ever have done.

Mom and Dad, you must set the example. When your children see how important prayer is to you, it becomes important to them. When they are included as a vital part of those prayers, they respect it more.

Hold Your Family Up

Husbands and wives should continually hold each other and their children up in prayer. Pray for all areas of your children's lives, including:

for healing from the pain of divorce or death of a parent,	for Godly friends,
for success in school,	for purity,
for spiritual growth,	for fruit of the Spirit of God

(Galatians 5:22),

for Godly future spouses,	for their future.
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Pray against rebellion, disobedience, strife, peer pressure, and manipulation. Pray for your natural and new children to feel a part of the new family.

Prayer Quiz

How would you describe your prayer time? Rate your prayer in these categories from 1 to 5, 5 being best:

QUANTITY _____	QUALITY _____	ORGANIZED _____
EFFECTIVENESS _____	WORSHIP/ THANKS _____	
LISTENING (prayer is 2 way communication) _____	BIBLE READING _____	

If you have any 3's or lower, you have great room for improvement. Don't get frustrated, GET FOCUSED!

Set Some Goals

Set goals concerning prayer for yourself and your family. Consider these:

- Pray together as husband and wife. If you find this difficult, get a “couple’s daily devotional” and read & discuss it together.
- Pray for specific needs, goals, and desires for each child.
- Ask you children what they want to pray for, and encourage them to pray.
- Prepare your prayer each day – do not pray the same prayers day after day. Converse with God your Father as you would with your best friend. *You won’t surprise Him with anything you might say.*
- Join a prayer meeting or attend prayer at church with your family.
- Set your alarm clock. Get up early to spend time with God. Don’t forget to listen!

Let the Breath (Spirit) of God breathe on your marriage and family! The Breath of God is REAL!

Live in God’s Presence, and Live Blessed!

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