



THE POWER OF FAMILY PRAYER

There is great power in prayer. Scripture gives us many examples of this: when the faithful gather to pray, the sick are healed, demons are cast out, and the dead are raised to life. Prayer is far more than spoken recitation or uplifting thoughts. As St. James reminds us, “the fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful” (James 5:16).

Even modern research affirms this power, as with studies that show how multiple brain regions activate when Carmelite nuns recall mystical experiences (Beauregard & Paquette, 2006). Prayer is not just communication with God—it is the very means by which we are united to Him. The late Fr. Patrick Peyton, founder of Family Theater Productions, famously said, “A family that prays together, stays together.” The enemy of our souls desires nothing more than to divide our families, just as he did with the first family in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3).

Yet the family is the domestic church—the place where children first learn to pray, persevere in faith, and belong to the wider Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2685). If we truly want our households to remain faithful to God, then family prayer must be a priority.



THE STRUGGLE WITH SCREENS AND FAMILY TIME

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

— 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

St. Thérèse of Lisieux described prayer as “a surge of the heart, a simple look turned toward heaven.” As Christians, even boredom can become an invitation to prayer, a moment to unite our hearts with Christ. Yet all too often, instead of lifting our eyes to God, we reach for the phones in our pockets. Instead of showing our children how to pray, we allow ourselves to be pulled away from family life. Many of us cherish childhood memories of faith, friendship, and family

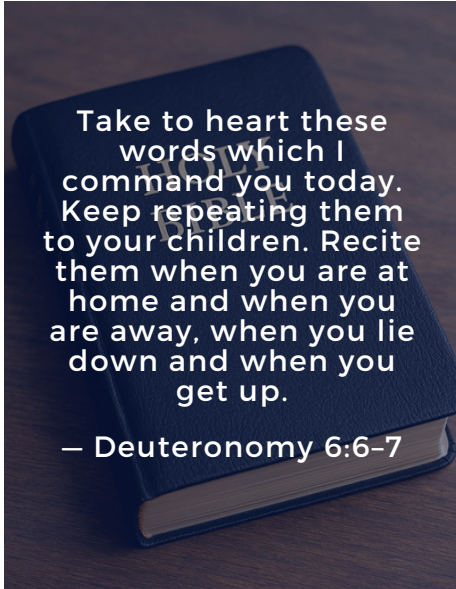
rituals—getting ready for church, celebrating holidays, or simple traditions passed down through generations. Today, digital devices have replaced many traditional experiences of childhood, and children caught in the glow of a screens fail to learn fundamental skills. If we want our households to remain strong in faith and values, we must practice vigilance and intentionality—not only in how we use technology, but in how we model faith and love for God. As Proverbs 4:23 exhorts us: “With all vigilance guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life.” Distractions, social media, and harmful content can subtly infiltrate our homes and undermine our faith. But by working together as families, we can resist manipulative technology and create routines that nourish both our faith and our domestic lives.

**Prioritize Family and values.
Delay Social Media.**

**Delay Smartphones.
Phone Free School Day.**



CREATING THE ROUTINE OF FAMILY PRAYER



The first step in establishing family prayer is to gather together and discuss when and how you will pray as a household. Christ counsels planning with care: “Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion?” (Luke 14:28). To model this care and build a foundation, begin with simple practices such as praying before meals and bedtime.

The second step is to create a sacred space. We naturally display what we value—art, report cards, family photos—for all to see. In the same way, setting aside a small space for prayer shows our children and visitors that our faith is central. This can be as simple as an end table with a Bible, a crucifix, and a candle.

When deciding what to pray, it is better to do one devotion faithfully than to attempt many sporadically. Here are some suggestions to guide your family:

- Read a passage from Scripture and share your reflections.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross during Lent.
- Light an Advent wreath and reflect on Christ’s birth.
- Pray the Rosary as a family, with each member leading a decade.
- Take a family prayer walk.

Whatever your family chooses, remember the words of St. Thérèse: “What matters in life is not great deeds, but great love.”

LET US PRAY

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and **lead us not into temptation**, but deliver us from evil.

Amen.



Smart Families is partnered with your church and/or school to educate, encourage and empower your community about the importance of delaying smartphones.

To learn more, visit www.smart-families.org

Sources: Beauregard M., & Paquette V. (2006). Neural correlates of a mystical experience in Carmelite nuns. *Neuroscience Letters*, 405, 186-190.