

*When
Families
Pray*

THE POWER
OF PRAYING TOGETHER

CHERI
FULLER

40 DEVOTIONS FOR PARENTS AND KIDS

When Families Pray

ALSO BY CHERI FULLER

When Children Pray

When Mothers Pray

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CHERI FULLER

*When
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How to Get the Most from When Families Pray



If you've picked up this book, chances are you want to make prayer a priority in your family. And you probably understand that, while our children can learn about prayer at church, God has given parents the real responsibility—and privilege—of discipling our children in prayer.

Home is the perfect place for children to learn to talk with and listen to God, and to see such conversation modeled as a natural, daily habit. I've written *When Families Pray* to help you do just that. This book is a devotional designed to draw you and your children closer to each other and closer to God as you pray together. It provides a blueprint for a vital family prayer life and encourages you to develop the habit of prayer as you learn helpful concepts for praying effectively.

Each devotion in this book includes:

- A true story that both kids and parents can relate to (each story is a real-life event that is either documented in writing or has been personally related to me by a parent or Christian leader)
- A central Scripture

- Interactive “Discussion Openers” to stimulate sharing by all family members
- Scriptures for deeper study
- A suggested prayer that can inspire your own prayers
- A thought-provoking quote about prayer from a great thinker or author

As you and your children read aloud and discuss each devotion, you'll have the opportunity to learn many important principles of prayer: how understanding God's Father-love for us motivates us to pray; how as His children we have a direct line to God at all times; how we can give all our problems to Jesus; how our prayers impact others far away, even across the world; and much more.

You'll also discover some keys to effective prayer such as persevering, putting on God's armor, praying with childlike faith, praying Scripture, and forgiving enemies. And you'll read about and discuss some of the problems we face in prayer, such as when God answers our prayers with wait or even no.

This book has something for everyone in your family. There are stories your five-year-old will delight in and stories your older children will enjoy. You'll find accounts from history, from the Bible, from real-life families, and from some very real children. Reading these true stories aloud and discussing them will not only bond you as a family, they'll help you discover what God does when *your family* prays together!

As you make this discovery, you'll experience a wonderful opportunity to ask God about your family's special calling in the arena of prayer. In fact, you may feel overwhelmed at the possibilities! If you do, remember that God doesn't call us all to pray for everything everyday, but *He does call us to pray*. So as you read, choose and use the ideas or areas of prayer for which God gives your family a special passion.

Each devotion in this book also includes thought-provoking “Discussion Openers.” You'll find simpler questions aimed at younger children and deeper questions to stimulate thought in your older kids and yourself. Use the questions to address your family's needs, adapting them as you see fit. If you have younger children, you might ask just one question or simply encourage them to discuss the story. If you

have older children, you might encourage them to ask questions of their own. And if your kids don't immediately respond to the questions and discussion, don't lose hope. You never know when something will "click" and your children will realize an important truth. It can happen during family devotions or after "lights out" or while riding in the car.

To further encourage family prayer, you'll find sidebars with helpful prayer tips and creative, fun ways to apply specific stories to your own family. You'll read about one family that takes prayer drives and another that prays nightly for one of their "Christmas card families." You'll find helpful, creative suggestions for incorporating prayer into your daily schedule, such as having each child spin a globe after dinner and pray for the nation his or her finger lands on. Don't feel pressured to put all the ideas into practice (at least not all at the same time!). Instead, ask God what He has in store for your family.

So many parents tell me, "We have to teach our kids to pray! We don't want to let busyness keep us and our children from connecting with God, yet we have hectic schedules." That's why this book includes forty doable, bite-sized, and fun-to-read devotions that you can use in a variety of ways. You may want to devote eight weeks to prayer, reading one devotion every Monday through Friday. You may want to read just one or two devotions each week. Determine what works best for your family.

While these devotions are ideal for parents and children to enjoy together, grandparents or aunts and uncles may want to participate, too. You'll also find this book a helpful resource if you're a Sunday school teacher, children's church worker, or Christian school teacher. Whoever you are, you don't have to be a seasoned intercessor or a prayer scholar to benefit from this devotional or to help kids develop the habit of regular, personal communication with God.

I pray that this book will encourage you, inspire you, and help you point your children to their heavenly Father who desires to have ongoing communication with them throughout their whole lives. That's the major purpose of prayer! As Oswald Chambers said, "The end of prayer is that I will come to know God Himself." I also pray that as you walk through these devotions, God will knit your hearts together; that as you pray, you and your children will see Him work in new ways,

sense His incredible faithfulness, and grow to trust Him more and more.

Your family will be blessed as you come together and pray. That's a promise because prayer is the key to blessing. And as your family prays not only for your own needs but for the needs of others, you'll receive the blessing first because you'll be touching God, the source of every grace, blessing, and gift (James 1:17).

May the Lord energize your family to be a blessing to others and mobilize you to join your prayers with other families and intercessors all over the world. Together, we can make an eternal difference in the lives of neighbors, families, friends, and even people groups and nations. The possibilities are endless when families pray!

Cheri Fuller

PRAYER JOURNAL

Your Family Prayer History

One of the best ways to build a spiritual heritage as a family is by recording your prayers and God's answers to those prayers. In Deuteronomy 6:7, God told the Israelites to remember and share with their children what He had done to protect, deliver, and provide for them. In the same way, God wants us to remember His wondrous acts in our lives. As we record them now and review them later, our hearts will fill with thanksgiving for the faithful God we serve. We will also be encouraged to trust Him in situations for which we do not yet see a ready answer.

Think of some of the most significant things God has done in your family and record them here. Then, as you read the devotions in this book and pray together, write new prayer requests and God's answers as they arise. By the time you've completed this book, you should have an entire history of God's faithfulness to your family. But I challenge you to continue this practice beyond the scope of this book—make it a lifelong habit to pray and acknowledge God's answers. Your faith will grow strong as you do!

DATE	NEED, REQUEST, OR PRAYER	GOD'S ANSWER

Daddy Loves Me



*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God!*

1 JOHN 3:1

Traveling for work can be a lonely thing when you have to leave your family behind. When Bill travels, he knows what it's like to come "home" to a hotel room instead of to his wife and children. His family misses him, too, and often he finds a little note or card in his luggage from his wife or one of his kids.

A couple of years ago, Bill was away on a trip and came across a note that his son, Alex, had smuggled into his luggage. Bill smiled as he read the crooked writing: "Alex loves Dad." What a great reminder of his loved ones at home! But then Bill noticed something else written on the paper. Turning it upside down, he read, "Dad loves Alex." His heart leaped! Bill was happy to read that Alex loved him, but to read that Alex *knew* his dad loved him...that was priceless!¹

God created us to give and receive love, not just with each other but with Him as well. He's our loving Father, and in many ways He constantly tells us, "*You are My child. I was delighted when you were born, and I love you still.*" God loves hearing that we love Him, but how His heart must jump when He knows that we really *get it*, that we understand, receive, and delight in His love.

When we understand the Father-love of God, we naturally desire to spend time talking with Him. Prayer is no longer a duty; it becomes a delight! We recognize God not as an unapproachable entity, but as the loving Father who invites us to come straight to Him and tell Him what our day was like, what we'll face tomorrow, and how we feel about life.

Some of us have earthly fathers who loved us well; others of us have been deeply hurt by our fathers. Either way, God wants us to experience the fullness of a heavenly Father in His steady, consistent love. As Bill says, "On God's daisy there is no 'He loves me not.'"

DISCUSSION OPENERS

1. Complete this sentence: "I know God loves me because..." Let's create a list of all the ways God shows His love.

2. Think back over the last month. Tell of a time when you really experienced your Father's love. If you have a hard time remembering, ask God to show you glimpses of Himself acting as your heavenly Father.

3. Parents, share with your children the kinds of things you like to hear them tell you. Then, as a family, tell those kinds of things to your heavenly Father.

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

Luke 15:11–31

John 15:9–12

A PRAYER

Father, we love You. Thank You for loving us.

We like these times of talking with You and listening to You.

When we get busy with our day, please remind us of Your presence.

*When we want to pull away from You, please remind us
that You never pull away from us.*

*When we shy away from Your discipline,
please remind us that it's part of Your love.*

*Thank You, Father, that Your love is steady and constant
and that You always want to hear from Your children.*

In Jesus' name, amen.

A PARTING THOUGHT

“Love God and you will always be speaking to Him.”

JEAN-NICHOLAS GROU²



A Loving Father

Approaching God as a Father may be easy if you've had a good earthly father. But if your dad was less than what God intended (and to some extent every father is), seeing God as a good and loving Father might be more difficult for you. If you or someone in your family has experienced the absence of a good and loving father, spend some time with the Scriptures for Going Deeper in this devotion. As a family, discuss the characteristics of a good father and how God exhibits those characteristics. Then pray that each of you can know and feel the Father's love. If necessary, ask God to show you how to talk with and/or forgive your earthly father.





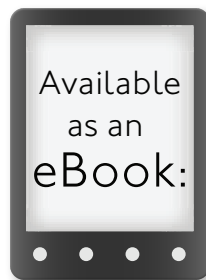
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