



T-I-M-E SPELLS LOVE

By Breanna Olaveson

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Families are as diverse as individuals. The activities they do together vary, but one thing is true for all of them: as President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said, “In family relationships *love* is really spelled *t-i-m-e*, time.”¹ Whether family members get together for scheduled outings, sharing interests, or serving others, these gatherings strengthen relationships that can be eternal. The families below share what they’ve learned about making time together a priority.

Individual Attention

Leyla Williams of Virginia, USA, understands that children need one-on-one interaction just as much as adults, so she and her husband make it a priority to schedule time with them.

“My husband and I came up with our ‘Mommy and Me’ or ‘Daddy and Me’ dates with our five children,” Leyla says. “We would take them out—one at a time—for an evening or afternoon together. Sometimes it was dinner, sometimes bowling, sometimes just an ice cream cone or playing at the playground. But it was always a chance to stay close to them as they grew and to keep lines of communication open.

“As our children got older, the conversations we had on these ‘dates’ would turn to problems they were having with school, friends, siblings, and—yes—even their

parents! Sometimes the conversations went deeper into struggles with certain commandments or their testimonies. Because we started when they were young, our teenage children were more comfortable broaching subjects that others their age might have found very difficult to discuss with a parent.

“Now that our older children are blazing through their teenage years, and all the activities that entails, we use it as a time to reconnect and reestablish those close relationships. Our kids look forward to it and like to plan their own activities. And with everyone headed in all different directions, I can look forward to those golden moments of having my children’s undivided attention for at least an hour or so.”

“When I’m Home, I’m Home”

Joe Staples of Utah, USA, sometimes found it challenging to keep an appropriate balance between his profession and his home life.

“Like many people, I had a natural tendency to want to excel, to do well, to get the next promotion—all worthy goals,” he says. “However, too often that ambition can come at the expense of family time.”

So, Joe set a rule that has helped him keep things in perspective and give his family the attention they need.





Grandparents can make a huge difference through an investment of quality time with their grandchildren.

“Early in my career I set a personal rule that has helped me tremendously. In a nutshell, it has been, ‘When I’m home, I’m home.’ For me that meant not coming home from work simply to do more work. Not checking e-mail on the weekend. Not taking business calls at my home. I try to make a clear distinction between my work life and my time with family. This approach didn’t detract from my ambitions at work, and there were occasional exceptions, but in general this simple rule created an environment where I could be an engaged and involved father during my all-important time at home.”

Redefining “Date Night”

Bob and Suellen Weiler of Georgia, USA, have learned through many years of marriage that while some things are nonnegotiable, that doesn’t mean “family time” can’t be redefined. When it comes to date night, they know that the activity isn’t the most important part.

“As a couple, we have had to redefine ‘date night’ many times over the years,” Suellen says. “Now and then we actually do the dinner-and-a-movie thing, but many times we count running errands together, an emergency visit to one of the families he home teaches, or going to the hospital to give a blessing as our date. Our experience is that a chat over ice cream can make any outing a ‘date!’”

Sharing Interests

Making family a priority can be a challenge at any phase of life, but once children are grown and grandchildren live far away, it can be particularly difficult to spend time with family members. One grandmother was determined to spend time with her grandchildren, even though it was difficult.

“Refusing to be robbed of the ties and strength that come from my bright grandchildren, I decided to fight back. Grandmas can do that, you know,” says Joan Bone of Utah.

Joan decided to set aside a day to spend time with her grandchildren who lived nearby, but she had difficulty deciding what they should do together. She considered the activities her grandchildren liked, but Joan wanted to do something they could all enjoy—grandma and grandchildren alike.

“A wonderful inspiration came to me,” she says. “It was, ‘Share with them what *you* like, what *you* do. They get plenty of the activities that they do.’”

“As we piled out of the car and gathered into my kitchen on the appointed day, the earthy aroma of wheat and yeast greeted us. The table was ready. The dough was prepared, and the boys’ eyes grew wide as I released it onto the table. My grandsons each took a portion and pushed, pulled, smacked, and rolled it. They smelled the dough and rubbed it against their cheeks. We laughed and talked and kneaded. We each formed a loaf and set it aside to rise again (if the yeast survived the intense workout the boys gave it) while we ate fried scones made from the extra dough. With honey dripping through our fingers, we enjoyed each other’s company and love.”

A Family Calling

The Ashby family from Utah has learned that serving in Church callings doesn’t need

to distract from family time. They often find ways to help their father fulfill his Church calling while still spending time together as a family.

“When my husband was set apart as bishop, we decided that our young family would seek out opportunities to combine family time and his calling whenever possible,” Lisa Ashby said. “We began ‘family visit nights,’ where we visit ward members to let them know we are thinking of them. We take homemade goodies to them on Sunday evenings or invite them over for dinner or family home evening.”

Together Forever

While it can be easy to get caught up in planning activities and coordinating schedules, it's significant to remember why families are important. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” states, “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.”² Thus, strengthening those relationships helps us prepare for eternal life.

We can teach our children these important principles by holding family prayer and family home evening, going to church, keeping the commandments, reading the scriptures together, and keeping the focus of all these activities on the temple.

No matter how busy we are, these efforts will make a difference. As Lisa Ashby explains, “Finding time within our callings or responsibilities to include the family brings great strength, deepens testimonies, softens hearts, and builds a strong foundation of faith and service.” ■

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Liahona* or *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 22.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* or *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



TIME PASSES QUICKLY

“Near the end of his life, one father looked back on how he had spent his time on earth. An acclaimed, respected author of numerous scholarly works, he said, ‘I wish I had written one less book and taken my children fishing more often.’

“Time passes quickly. Many parents say that it seems like yesterday that their children were born. Now those children are grown, perhaps with children of their own. ‘Where did the years go?’ they ask. We cannot call back time that is past, we cannot stop time that now is, and we cannot experience the future in our present state. Time is a gift, a treasure not to be put aside for the future but to be used wisely in the present.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Dedication Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 66.

Inviting the Spirit through hymns helps unite families.

