



Families

That Pray Together

By Diane M. Ferguson, Church Magazines

When the Savior visited the Americas, He counseled the Nephites, “Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:21). Praying with our families helps us align our will with our Heavenly Father’s, resulting in blessings of strength, comfort, and inspiration that enable our families to experience the love of the Savior more abundantly. Below, families share how praying together has helped them grow closer to each other and to the Savior.

Improving Communication

Praying together unites families under a banner of common goals as family members pray for and hear others concerns. Serena Gedlaman of Canada says, “As a family we began to discuss our blessings and needs before prayer time. Perhaps our children were grateful for a recent blessing. Maybe they were worried about their participation in an important event or a friend in need. We talked about anything we felt should be brought before the Lord.

“Communicating like this as a family brought change. We focused on our blessings and became more supportive as we learned of one another’s challenges. Our family has a testimony of the power of sincere prayer.”

Away from Home

Those who do not live with their families can still benefit from family prayer. Chris Burnham from California, USA, says, “While I was on my mission in Argentina, my parents would write every week that they were praying for me. Even though I wasn’t there to actually hear the words of their prayers, imagining them kneeling together and thinking of me helped me see how much they love me. I know that praying as a family has brought us closer together.”

Although roommates may not be from the same family, roommate prayers can help strengthen relationships and build testimonies of the gospel. At first, Cheryl Merrick of Utah, USA, struggled to get along with her college



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roommates. She says, “Basically we just came and went, ignoring each other as much as possible. But after a few weeks, we all became ill with the flu. After spending a week helping each other survive, we all knew we had to make some changes, and we decided to start praying together daily.

“It turned out that the only time we could be together was at six in the morning. I can still see one roommate sitting there half asleep with curlers in her hair, but she always made it.

“I was astounded at the difference that prayer made in helping six women live together in a very small house. As we prayed together each day, our love for each other grew. We shopped and cooked together. We helped each other through difficult times, and we became friends.”



A Leap of Faith

Beverly Crowter of the United Kingdom and her family prayed together on a regular basis. As her husband's multiple sclerosis began to take a serious toll on his health, Beverly says, "We reached a point where he needed the assistance of caregivers to get him up and dressed each morning. Our 10-year-old son, Daniel, would need to leave for school before the caregivers had finished, but we didn't want any member of the family left out of family prayer.

"We made a decision to have the caregivers take a short break from helping my husband so we could hold family prayer before Daniel left, and we invited the caregivers to join us. It was very spiritual to have them kneel with us as we sought the Lord's

We didn't want to leave anyone out of family prayer, so we invited the caregivers to join us.

protection for that day. One of the caregivers did not believe in God and initially would stand in the far corner of the room while we prayed. Over time his heart softened, and he stood near us. He developed a great respect for my husband's strong faith, which led to many discussions about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"It required a leap of faith for us to invite the caregivers to kneel in family prayer with us. We were blessed with a greater outpouring of the Spirit in our home."

On the Land or the Sea

Don Robertson of Utah remembers how his testimony of family

and personal prayer strengthened him while he was training to be an electronic technician in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He says, "I was excited for this opportunity, but I soon discovered that grading in the class was based on the class average. Many of my classmates had attended or even graduated from college and were much better prepared than I was with only a high school education. I loved the course, but my test scores were below average. I was worried and wondered what I should do.

"I began studying every spare minute, from early in the morning until lights-out at night until it became an obsession. After a week or so, I noticed that I was losing my self-confidence, sense of humor, and ability to relax. I asked myself, 'Where can I go for help, and who would even understand my situation? What can I do?'

"The crisis reached a climax when the commander of the school called me into his office and told me that because of my grades I would need to leave school and go into the regular navy. Then he paused for a moment and asked if I would like another chance. I said, 'Oh, I would like another chance!'"

This time, Don knew where he could turn for help. He says, "Family prayer was common in our home. As a result, we children grew up with the habit of personal prayer. It was natural, in this overwhelming predicament, for me to turn to Heavenly Father. At night, I would pull the covers over my head and plead with all of my heart for help.

"I continued to study the best I could. One day, while I was walking alone through the hall, I felt a strong impression to just continue studying

and praying. I recognized immediately that it was an answer to my prayers and felt a great load removed from me. I exclaimed to myself enthusiastically, 'Well, I can do that!'

Don forged ahead with greater confidence and faith. He says, "My worry had been replaced with the faith and hope that I could succeed. I was able to graduate and go on to serve in the navy with a sure faith in the Lord that has never left me. How thankful I am for good parents who taught me through family prayer that Heavenly Father will always be there."

A Child's Prayer

Bonnie Adams of California received an answer to a personal question one hectic morning during family prayer. Running late, she told her children that there would not be enough time to pray together. She says, "To my surprise, my children objected. I said, 'OK, but I'm too grumpy this morning. Who will say it?'

"My youngest replied, 'I will, Mommy.'

"My little boy said things only Heavenly Father could know about my so-called problem, without realizing it. He asked Heavenly Father to bless me because I was having a hard time and he missed my smile. The prayer gave me an answer I'd been searching for, an answer I needed to hear.

"After the prayer, I opened my eyes and immediately smiled a real, sincere, ear-to-ear smile, though my eyes were brimming with tears. I kissed my boys and walked them to school.

"When I came home, I knelt down again to thank my Heavenly Father for my child's beautiful prayer and for the comfort I had found through family prayer."



THE POWER OF FAMILY PRAYER

A prominent American judge was asked what

we as citizens of the countries of the world could do to reduce crime and disobedience to law and to bring peace and contentment into our lives and into our nations. He carefully replied, 'I would suggest a return to the old-fashioned practice of family prayer.'

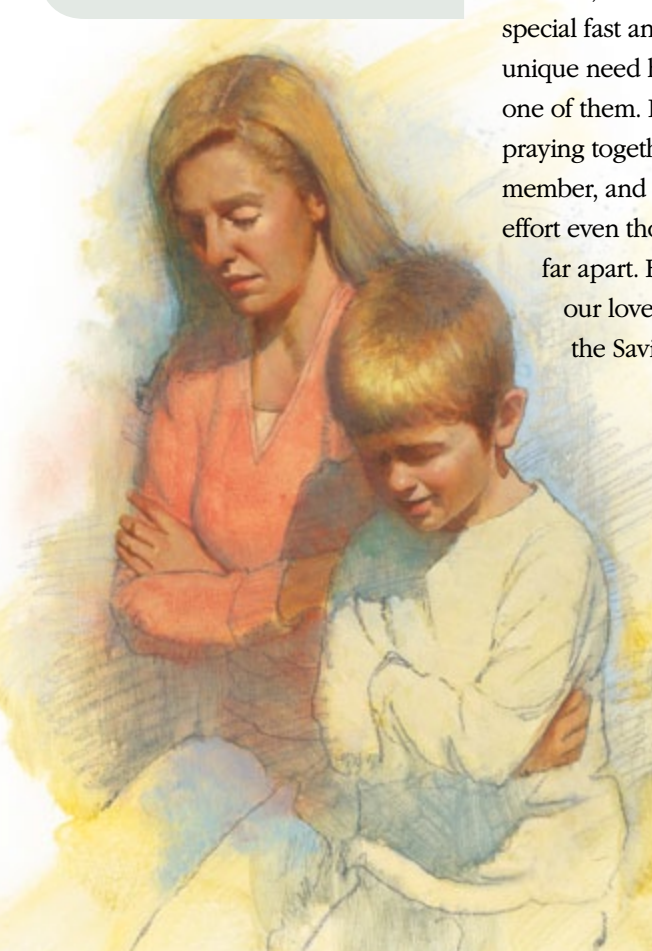
"As a people, aren't we grateful that family prayer is not an out-of-date practice with us? There is no more beautiful sight in all this world than to see a family praying together. There is real meaning behind the oft-quoted 'The family that prays together stays together.' "

President Thomas S. Monson, "Come unto Him in Prayer and Faith," *Ensign*, March 2009, 5.

Fortifying Our Families

Whether we struggle with challenges, live away from home, or want to unify the members of our family, the Lord blesses us when we pray with our families. Jill Malczyk from New York says, "Family prayer has always started and finished each day. Kneeling together in a circle is such a stabilizing gesture of reverence and seems to bring everyone into focus. Even though our children are all married and have their own families, my husband and I continue to have morning and evening prayer together. We need that prayer in the morning to fortify ourselves for the demands of the day, and our prayers at night give us the opportunity to thank a kind and merciful Father in Heaven for all that He has blessed us with that day.

"Many times, I have called all the children, asking them to join in a special fast and prayer whenever a unique need has come about for any one of them. I love knowing we are all praying together for a specific family member, and it becomes a united effort even though everyone lives so far apart. Family prayer strengthens our love for each other and for the Savior." ■



My little boy said things only Heavenly Father could know about my problems.