

Praying with and for our Children

By B. D. Tate

All Christian parents pray for their children, at least most do. Most don't need to be reminded because they already sense the purpose. In our world there are a lot of things that can go wrong, if we think about it too much it can overwhelm us with fear. We know there are many things that we cannot control involving our offspring, therefore going to the Lord in prayer about our children is right and expected. **God is waiting for us to do so.** God expects us to lift them up, their needs, their welfare, and their place in life. God places the desire to seek Him concerning our children in our hearts. It is our privilege and responsibility to pray with and for them all of our lives.

Fear often is our strongest motivation. We know how vulnerable and precious our children's lives are. We know some pretty bad things can happen. We want them safe, healthy, happy, and fulfilled. There are many things in life that can hinder, steal, or destroy, these things from them.

Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family Ministries says, that parenting is the **most guilt producing job there is.** There will always be things we didn't do and/or things we did wrong. Parents are not perfect and many feel inadequate to do the job. Prayer is the answer to bringing parenting failures, neglects, and mishaps to the Lord. We need the Lord to direct our parenting, our training, our teaching, our discipline, for without him we labor in vain. Psalm 127:1 *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."*

Our fears and guilt generally are great motivators to go to the Lord in prayer. When our children get sick our fears soar. When they get into trouble our parental image takes a hit. When our children don't do well in school, sports, activities, or social settings our own personal issues can resurface. We feel what they feel; we live what they live; we hurt and grieve when they do. **We closely identify with our children.** We all know too well the pains, struggles, and insecurities of growing up. We are able to empathize with them and in prayer that gives us insight, it gives us heart felt intercession. **This makes us prayer warriors on their behalf.**

There is another reason that parents make great prayer warriors for their children: **They are in the right position before God.** God expects us to pray but also depends on us to offer supplications and claims. Parents are the steward/owners instituted by God. This places us in unique authority with God concerning them. We are their guardians and are responsible for their spiritual lives. This means that God is looking to parents to lead, guide, instruct, correct, train, and live before their children a godly life. Parents are given decision making power over their lives and God will hold each of us accountable for what we do with it.

Psalm 127:4 *"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth."* **God has placed the targeting of our children in our hands.** We point them in the direction they should go, not the direction we want them to go. Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he/she should go, and when he/she is old he/she will not depart from it."* With this responsibility comes full access to the throne of grace. We need to pray about their training, teaching, guidance, discipline, their future, their gifts and graces, so that we are doing it the way God's wants.

As parents if we neglect our role to pray with and for our children we will be **robbing them of God's blessing**. God has given humanity dominion in the earth; prayer is God's connection with us to get things done. God only has access into our children's lives to a certain degree, **if we pray we authorize Him to do abundantly more**. Some of that more is overcoming our ways, mistakes, wrongs, neglects, etc. Some of that more is God's protection, foresight, provision, such as giving His angels charge over our kids. **Our prayers release God's will into their lives**. If we haven't been praying, start! Parents who don't pray hinder their children's future, harming their present life, and have hurt the past. It is imperative to understand the importance of our parental role to pray.

We pray for many things calling upon the Lord such as: salvation, wise choices, discernment, and a heart for God, choosing good friends, etc. One of the major issues we pray for is for each one of our kids to find their place in this world. **We pray because we know God will hear us and because we feel it so deeply.**

We pray because:

- 1) They are our responsibility
- 2) We are motivated on their behalf
- 3) We love them like no other
- 4) We are in a position of authority before God's throne
- 5) We closely identify and empathize...a strong bond
- 6) Because it overcomes so much

When a child learns and sees that a father and/or mother are praying for them it **provides them comfort**. It speaks volumes to their hearts to know that God is being included in their life. It shows how important our faith is. Sometimes it's not so much what we say but what we do that gets noticed. Children are comforted to know that the ones in control of their lives are also under God's control.

Why we pray may be obvious what we pray may not be...we pray about everything and anything! We lift up A to Z and when it comes to our children and why shouldn't we? Small or large God listens and taking everything to Him builds faith and partnership. **Children will catch the importance of prayer if it is that important to us.**

Practicing prayer isn't a show. It should be genuine. It can be simple and short a sentence or two, any time and any where. Our prayers can be spoken and/or from the heart. We can bow our knees before a bed, stand in the middle of the living room, and pray before meals, before school, activities, sports, or going on trips. The fact that we stopped to acknowledge and pray shows **we're not ashamed**, we believe it and therefore we practice it. Prayer takes place when our hearts reach out to God's heart. Sometimes it is with heart felt desires and tears.

We need to pray when we are fearful, anxious, worried, waiting, and when we are angry, burdened, overwhelmed. Our prayers need to be real, expecting God to hear, waiting in prayer for answers, waiting for God's release, peace, and joy. **Prayer isn't just about taking our requests to God it is also about listening.** I can remember a few times when I didn't know how to handle some of the situations that arose. I wasn't sure what was going on and spent time in prayer asking God to direct. In time, I felt a solution and direction come to me. I took it as God's answer because I was in prayer, staying in prayer, surrounded by God in prayer. I followed those directions and the situations

resolved. It is in prayer that we think clearer, get a fix on things, see things from God's perspective, and learn to trust His leadings.

What to pray about:

- 1) Their well being, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- 2) Their future, education, social development, vocation, marriage
- 3) Their everyday experiences, at school, on the playground, in the lunch room, their friends, on the bus, at home or in the neighborhood
- 4) Their character, wisdom, interests, desires, goals
- 5) Their choices in life, what friends they make, what TV or music they watch or listen to, what entertainment they get involved with, sports, activities, etc.
- 6) Their conscience, guidance, spiritual awakening and salvation, growth, teaching, and training in the Word of God

There really isn't too much we shouldn't pray for...

The following is a type of prayer I have prayed all of their lives:

"This is the day the Lord has made we will rejoice and be glad in it. For He has given to me and my household all things that pertain to life and godliness; in Him we live and move and have our being. The Lord is the good shepherd of my household; we know His voice and a stranger's voice we will not follow. The Lord supplies all that we need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. We harken to the voice of the Lord to listen and obey. Our consciences are true guides because the Holy Spirit has cleansed and purged them.

Because we make the Lord our God our habitation, we shall fear no evil, neither shall any plague come neigh our dwelling. He gives His angels charge over each of us to keep and watch over us, lest we should dash our foot against a stone (or have an accident). He surrounds my household with favor as with a shield for His name's sake. In our path there is life and there is no death—to the glory of god the Father."

This prayer and similar prayers have always comforted me concerning my family. The point of each sentence is taken from a scripture promise. Praying the Word of God can and usually does mean we are praying the Will of God. Subjecting ourselves to His word is like subjecting ourselves, our family, to God's will. God sees ahead and knows what is coming down the road, He goes before us, and will provide. It is greatly encouraging to know how much **God has already promised** to do in His word, if we listen and obey.

Praying with our children is a most impressionable event. It says to our kids that we think prayer is so important that we are going to do it with you. Children who witness their authority figures praying see an **outstanding example to follow**. If we look to God they will to. If we see God involved in every area of our lives they will to. There are bonds established by parents who pray with their kids. In the present and future when needs arise it leads and trains them where to turn and who to trust.

Short story: An old man who had lived a hard life, much of it outside the church, recently told me that he was praying again. Old and very weak, life wasn't long for him; He decided that spiritual things mattered again. He hadn't prayed for many years. In the night time after reading the Bible again, he began to remember a childhood prayer. He

told me the prayer but it was in German. He didn't even understand it. He began to say it each night, knowing that it was the prayer his mother or father taught him. He said it with meaning, even though he didn't know what it meant. After some time passed he began to recall what it meant. "May the Lord bless you and keep you..." This was something of what it meant he wasn't sure; however, he knew he was reconnected to that investment by his parents many years before.

What we do with children it will be remembered for a lifetime.