



Reasons to Teach Your Children to Pray

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I read a blog published 11.00 am on Monday 16th March 2015 by Janet Denison. Having read it, I thought this is something valuable for all parents and children to be reminded of. Janet begins by highlighting the fact that we teach our children the colours of the world and how to count their fingers and toes. We teach them how to say “thank you” when they should be grateful and “I am sorry” if they have made a mistake. We teach our children not to communicate what they are thinking and feeling. It is important that we teach them how to talk to others. It is crucial that we teach them how to talk with God.

Most mothers value the benefits of breast feeding new born babes on the milk her body naturally produces and which is eagerly consumed by the hungry infant. Her child, however, cannot grow and succeed unless he is weaned and learns to eat for himself. It is generally observed that content Christians are those who have learned how to spend time with God alone, growing and learning from that which they “consume” on their own. Prayer is a good way to begin the “weaning process” and raise children who will be strong, mature believers and followers of Jesus.

What will your child learn if you teach them to pray? They will learn that God is real, and that He is God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray saying, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9, 10). When we teach our children pray, we teach them to talk to the Creator of the world who is listening in heaven. When we honour God’s name, we honour Him as our King. When children pray, they will understand that they have access to the God of the universe and He wants to talk with them about His will for their lives. God wants to be their King.

Prayer is the way they will develop a close, personal relationship with God. “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalms 46:10). The strongest relationships in our lives are with people we have chosen to spend time with in a quiet, exclusive way. The same is true of our relationship with God. If the only time your child spends with God is in the presence of other people, then God is most likely to remain an “acquaintance” rather than a close, personal friend. Teach your children to be still and to spend time alone with God.

They will learn that God loves them and listens to their prayers. Jesus said, “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:13, 14). It is normal for children to pray for everything they want, and to expect God to do whatever they ask of Him. Most parents struggle with helping their child understand that God’s answers to prayer are not always the same as their requests.



Jesus said, “If you ask in my name, I will do it.” He said, when you ask for what His holy and perfect character wants to give or do, He will do it. When children pray they will learn that God loves them too much to give them something that is not



just as they asked. God loves to show his children that he loves them and listens to them. When children pray, they will see God answer and know He heard their prayers.

Children will learn that God's answers are unique and important. "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3). Children will often ask parents or friends for advice. One of the most important things a child can learn is that the only perfect advice is God's. God's answers are unique wisdom that can only be

gained by "calling on Him." One of the reasons parents need to "wean" their children spiritually is so that their children will learn to turn to God for the answers that are "hidden" and that cannot be "known" any other way. That is a lesson that will carry them through life. (And it can make the high school and college years a little less stressful for parents!)

Prayer will teach your children that when they make a mistake, there is help and forgiveness available to them, to make it right. "If we confess our sins, He is able faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Prayer will help your children understand God's will for their lives, and that nobody makes perfect choices. Prayer is the first and best response when your children need discipline.

Prayer teaches them that God knows their failure and has a plan to redeem. When a parent prays with their child and ask God for wisdom to know how to discipline, the child is much more likely to learn from that discipline. Your child will learn that they need to make their mistakes right with God and right with others. Prayer will show your child that there is both consequence and forgiveness for mistakes and teach them that God redeems for His greater purpose (see Romans 8:28).

We know that our children must be weaned physically if they are to grow and become successful adults. God calls us, as parents, to wean our children spiritually as well. Prayer is one of the best ways to introduce your toddler to God. A prayer-filled life will teach children to grow from a toddler relationship to a strong walk with God as their King. Our children deserve the chance to become all that God has called them to be and prayer is key to providing them that opportunity.



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you" (Jeremiah 29:11, 12).