



Fasting And Prayer Ideas For Families

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. II Chronicles 7:14

As our church heads into this important period of fasting and prayer (starting Feb. 1st), we thought it would be helpful to give some possibilities for how your family can unite together and participate in this 21 Days.

Obviously you wouldn't ask your children to fast from food for 21 days. But there are things your children, as part of your family, CAN sacrifice for a period of time. Remember, fasting isn't just about what we give up. It's about emptying ourselves to be filled with more of God. It's about using the time we would have used for whatever we give up, to press in to God. Even young children can take part in this and can begin to understand a little about this important spiritual discipline.

Ideas for what to give up during the 21 Days:

1. **Television...**this is a tough, but really good one! Your family could give up t.v. for part of the day each day, for a period of days, or for the whole 21 days! At times when you would typically be watching, pray instead. Use the time to ask God for blessing in your family. Ask for break-through in the things your family needs God's help with.
2. **Video games...**if your child is really "into" playing video games, talk with him/her about giving them up for a period of time. Apply the same principles listed above for television fasting.
3. **Candy or sweets...**maybe your family loves candy, or dessert at the end of meals. Giving those things up and praying at your normal dessert time if you have one would work great! Or maybe if your child loves candy, talk to him/her about giving it up and designating a time each day to pray instead. This would work with any specific food your child loves to snack on-especially for older kids who can understand all of this a little better.
4. **A family activity...**maybe your family does something special together each week, like go out to eat and to a movie. What a great thing to give up once or twice and dedicate the time instead to prayer as a family! Maybe on those nights you could still go out to eat but then your family goes home and prays together. You could also order in pizza and pray together afterward.

What Your Family Could Pray for:

- school
- friends
- immediate family
- extended family
- church-pastors, elders, teachers, etc.
- children's ministry
- specific family issues such as anger, disobedience, lack of spiritual discipline, etc.
- missionaries
- a person you know that is sick
- neighbors

Ways to Pray as a Family

Your options will differ, depending on the age of your children. We encourage you as parents to pray ahead of time about what God wants your family to do. Some ideas are:

1. "Prayer Lists" If you are going to fast for at least a whole week from something, make a list of what you are going to pray for each day. For example, Monday-our family, Tuesday-our extended family, etc.
2. "Journaling" If your kids are old enough, buy each person in your family a journal. Use part of your designated prayer time for prayer together as a family, then each of you also journal for a period of time. At the end of the 21 Days, share things from your journal where you've seen God answer your prayers.
3. "Pray for Break-through" If there is a big break-through area your family is praying for, pray for that every time you gather to pray. Then you could follow that with prayer for the things from your daily list.
4. "Family Theme Song" Choose a Christian song to be a theme song for your family during this time. Begin each family prayer time by playing that song.
5. "Prayer Walk or Drive" Even though it's cold outside, you could bundle up and take a short walk around your neighborhood and pray for neighbors and their families. When you get back home you could warm up with hot cocoa and talk about your walk.
6. "Prayer Walk" in your home. Walk around your house and pray inside each room, for God's blessing and protection on that area, etc. In bedrooms, pray for peaceful sleep, protection from nightmares and growth in Christ for that person.
7. "Prayer Park" in the parking lot at your church, school, grocery store, etc. Drive to one of these places and sit in the car together and pray.

We pray that your family will somehow be able to join in the 21 days together. We really sense God telling us that this is going to be a break-through time for individuals, families and our church body. We will be praying for you-the young families of our church, as you look to Him for what He wants you to do during this time.