

# Prayer for marriages and families

There is an immense onslaught on family life. There has probably never been a time in history when marriage and family life have been under such strain. Purposeful, systematic, intelligent and persevering prayer is necessary in this area.

## A. Prayer at the family altar

- It is important that every family pray together. Husband and wife should pray together regularly, but there should be a certain time each day when the whole family prays together and studies the Bible.
- Create an atmosphere for Bible study and prayer in the home. It should be possible to pray naturally for any matter in the home be it a crisis or thanking the Lord for an answer to prayer, or something that He has done.
- There must be a specific time and place when and where you can pray. There must be a place where the family can get together to have fellowship with God. There must be a specific time that suits everybody, and everybody should be aware that this is the time the family spends together with God.
- Use a book in which the family can write down their prayers and be sure to enter the answers regularly. It builds faith and teaches us to thank God for His answers.
- It is also meaningful to have, apart from the specific prayers concerning the family, a prayer schedule according to which you can pray. For instance, you can pray for the authorities on a Monday, on Tuesday you can pray for your minister/pastor and a missionary (one whom the family has "adopted"). On Wednesday you can pray for unsaved people, etc. Each family can draw up their own programme.
- Each member of the family must participate in prayer. Don't force anybody to pray - each member must do it out of his own free will.
- Practice continued prayer. Each person prays for one item at a time and the others join him/her in silent prayer. Otherwise each member of the family can choose an item he/she wants to pray for on that occasion. The book by Rosalind Rinker, *Prayer: Conversing with God* is excellent and worth reading.
- Share answers that you have received on prayer throughout the day with each other. it builds the other's faith and gives them more confidence to ask for specific things as well.
- Teach your family members to ask specific things of the Lord. When we pray for specific things we expect specific answers.
- The family altar is not a substitute for your personal quiet time.
- The following elements are important for family prayer:
  - praise and worship;
  - thanksgiving;
  - personal requests by different members of the family;
  - praying Scripture;
  - intercession for the outside world - for unsaved people and the poor.

## **B. What to pray for in families**

### **Pray for the father/husband**

- Pray that he will love his wife as Christ loves the church. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies...he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church" (Eph.5:25-32). "Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them" (Col.3:19). "Husbands in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life so that nothing will hinder your prayers" (1 Pe.3:7).
- Pray that the father will be the priest in the home by giving guidance and praying for his family.
- Pray that the father will exercise his authority given to him by God and not leave it to his wife.
- Pray that the husband will be reasonable towards his wife. Pray for the husband for patience with his wife and for self control with regard to his family.
- Pray that he will be aware of his wife's need for love, safety and security, together with all her other needs and that he will pay attention to them.
- Pray that he will exercise leadership (spiritually as well as socially) at home and that he will provide for his family.

### **Pray for the mother/wife**

- Pray that she will submit to her husband in everything as the church is submissive to Christ (Eph.5:22-24). "Wives in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that if any of them do not believe the Word they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes" (1 Pe.3:1-3) "...the wife must respect her husband" (Eph.5:33).
- Pray for a quiet and gentle spirit, and that she will know when to keep quiet. Pray for the wife for patience with her husband.
- Pray that she will respect her husband and that she will not try to dominate or prescribe to him.
- Pray that she will not complain about her husband but will respect him and try to meet his needs.
- Pray that the wife will accept her husband's leadership.
- Pray that the wife will realise that her husband is a fellow sinner, that she will have patience with his faults, and that she will allow him the freedom to be himself.
- Specifically pray against a domineering attitude in the wife (especially in cases where she is spiritually stronger than her husband), because this can cause endless damage to the children. Also pray against any form of manipulation on the part of the wife. Manipulation is always negative.

## **What to pray for the children**

- Pray for obedience and submissiveness to the parents.
- Pray for their salvation and for the spiritual growth of those already saved.
- Pray for their physical growth, health and good eating habits.
- Pray for their education and sports activities.
- Pray for their intellectual development and for their growing in wisdom and knowledge.
- Pray for the figures of authority with whom they have daily contact: teachers, sports coaches, parents, grandparents, etc.
- Pray for their social development and for a pure walk in life so that they may discern between right and wrong, that they will be able to resist temptation.
- Resist the Evil One who will try to destroy their lives.
- While they're young, begin to pray for the right choice of career and marriage partners.
- Pray that they will love God and His Word, and also pray for their joy in life.
- Pray that they will choose the right friends.

## **General**

- Pray against the spirit of divorce, lust and impurity.
- Especially pray against the following sins, that the Holy Spirit will convict people of these and that they will turn from them: homosexuality, co-habitation, adultery, child molesting, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse.
- Pray against the involvement of a third party in the marriage.
- Pray for an open relationship and good communication in the marriage.
- Pray for deep conviction of sin and that the husband and wife will walk in the light of God together.
- Pray for understanding of each other's needs and the ability and willingness to meet those needs.
- Pray against every form of selfishness, self-indulgence and wilfulness in the marriage.
- Pray that there will be no misunderstandings. The single, biggest problem in marriages is misunderstanding.
- When there are specific problems in the marriage, e.g. jealousy, misuse of alcohol and extra-marital relationships, one must pray specifically for these matters.
- Pray for the parents in their raising and handling of their children.
- Pray for forgiveness, that marriage partners will forget the past and forgive one another for what happened in the past.
- Pray for widowers, widows and couples who are unable to have children, and also for children without parents and children in orphanages. Pray for the single and lonely people who long for the security of a family.
- Pray for children who have run away from home, and for children whose friends have a bad influence on them.