

NAVIGATING FAMILY PRIORITIES

PARENT
GROUP
SERIES

#2 SPIRITUAL LIFE

PARENT GROUP SERIES

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Families, more than ever, are caught in a continual battle of prioritizing and scheduling their lives. There is a never-ending struggle with the families of our ministries as they try to balance God, church, and your ministry with the pressure of extra-curricular activities, academics and social life.

Our American society has continued to push children and teens to the brink in order to be in first place in everything. Moms and Dads have also been swept up in the pressure to achieve. Stress levels are running high as more and more homes are cracking under the pressure of parent's careers and children's packed lives.

This 4-part study is for parents to refocus their attentions and intentions back on what should be first place in their home, God and His kingdom. Each stand-alone but connected study will be based around one of the key sections of Matthew 6. The key over-arching verse of the whole study will be Matthew 6:33:

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

STUDY #2

OVERVIEW

Spiritual Life

This lesson will begin to allow parents to examine their own lives and priorities while also taking a hard look at the spiritual climate of their family's priorities.

The key section of Matthew 6 for this lesson will be verses 5-18. The central part of this passage, verses 9-14, is the commonly known as the "Lord's Prayer".

This second week will be a challenge to the way parents are praying and approaching God in their home.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

WHAT

Helping parents step back and examine the priorities of their family. Challenging parents to reprioritize their lives around Christ and His kingdom and not around earthly things.

WHY

Families are living over-scheduled, stress-filled lives, chasing down the "American Dream" and "Keeping up with the Jones." Instead, they should be "Seeking First the Kingdom of God..."

HOW

Systematically teaching through Matthew 6, examining the topics and instructions in Big Group times. Breaking out into Small Group times to share, discuss and pray. Taking Home what is learned and discussed in each week's study with their family to work to plan, ask and seek to apply.

HINTS & HELPS

TEACHING, TALKING AND TIMING

This study is set up as a set of 4 seminars. This means that each lesson can be taught as a stand-alone study or as a multi-event curriculum. These studies may also work as part of monthly parent meetings or quarterly parent nights. Do not feel like you must limit the study to just one meeting. For example, study #2 will be covering the “Lord’s Prayer”. The lesson covers a large amount of information, and honestly may take you 2 different times to cover.

Each topic is a big topic and issue and can possibly take two meetings to teach. Make sure you are taking the time to answer all questions parents might have. It can be easy to focus on providing the lesson and miss time for discussion. Yet, if parent has come to engage on a specific topic because they have an interest in that topic, then they want information; but they also need a place to wrestle with the difficulties of raising their children.

Feel free to adjust, as we have provided more than enough content per study along with an extra suggested passage to “Get Deeper”. In addition, the study is geared toward parents who regularly attend church in some way. If you are gearing this towards parents who come from a more unchurched background, then feel free to adapt it how you see fit, as this is more of a Bible study formatted series. You know the parents coming and can easily make these lessons more of your own.

HINTS & HELPS

Be aware of “the one.” There is always the one person in the room who wants to dominate the conversation. Gently and respectfully make sure all parents have an opportunity to share their thoughts, questions and concerns.

NOT EVERYONE WILL AGREE

The concepts in these lessons are made to both inform and create open dialogue. When covering the topic of priorities, including examining things like “sports” involvement, this may stir up some differing views. There are different parenting styles, engagement and belief systems in play. Be respectful and honor each person in the room. Make sure you are sifting out the difference between Biblical truth and opinion on a topic, and share the difference when speaking. Help parents know that what works for their family will not always work for another, and that is fine.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS & COMMUNICATION

Often times, when you set out to offer trainings and lessons for parents you may unintentionally believe, “Some parents just won't engage.” It's true that no matter what you do there will always be some parents who don't come to anything you offer. However, expect every parent, every time. When you change your attitude to one of anticipation, then the approach you take to inviting parents, prepping for lessons and teaching takes on a whole new light.

HINTS & HELPS

... It might sound corny, but whether 2 or 20 parents show up, it matters to that one that you are totally in.

Communicate clearly what the series is that you are offering and how it will benefit them. Avoid vague ideas like, "It will help you be a better parent." Instead, communicate the specific way this will help them understand their student better and feel better connected. We have included a sample letter for you to use. Feel free to cut and paste into an email or a physical mailing, or use it as inspiration for your own letter you will write to parents.

COME PREPARED

Lessons are intentionally made in an easy to follow format. To teach them should not take a lot of preparation. It's important, however, to take a look and read through the curriculum to know if you will need internet access for media clip, copies or any other materials for your presentation.

SAMPLE LETTER

Parents!!

First of all, I want to thank you for the privilege and honor of allowing me to speak into the life of your child. Raising today's generation can be tough, and I want you to know how much I appreciate the hard work you put into your child.

You are probably used to getting letters and flyers from me, communicating something for your child. This time, I wanted to share an invitation that is JUST FOR YOU!!!!

We are starting a new 4-week study, just for parents (if you are getting this then you are invited) entitled, "Navigating Family Priorities". The goal of this series is to help you. I know you sometimes feel stressed and overwhelmed by your family's schedule. Between work, school, and after-school activities, then you add on church, it seems like there is no way to keep up with all of it.

This series is an opportunity to step back and take a look at your schedule, priorities, and even the direction your family is heading. I do not want this to be another thing you add to your long list of things to do or places to be.

The next couple of weeks are going to be a time to connect with other parents just like you. It will be a time to take a big breath from the crazy, while studying Matthew 6 together. We will also have time to break into small groups to talk, share, support and pray.

Here is the information.

When:

Where:

Other details:

I look forward to you being a part of this time. Your input and discussion will be invaluable! Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Bob Jones

GROUP TIME #2

SPIRITUAL LIFE

OBJECTIVES

- Parents will re-examine their family's spiritual priorities
- Parents will study the "Lord's Prayer" and how it outlines the priorities of our spiritual life.
- Parents will be able to see the Lord's prayer as a model for their family's prayer life as well as an outline for their family's spiritual life.

PRAYER

Prioritizing a relationship with God and a deeper family prayer life

MAIN SCRIPTURE

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
Matthew 6:6-15*

SETUP/ PREPARATION

None

GROUP TIME #2

BIG GROUP

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

Have everyone stand up and find 2 people they have never met or have not talked to yet. Share your name, your child/children's name, and your favorite place to eat as a family, besides at home.

GET STARTED

Have someone open the time in prayer.

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

Who taught you to pray?

Did you have a special prayer or a family prayer growing up? For meals? Other times?

What is your earliest memory of praying or hearing someone pray?

Have you taught your kids to pray?

*How often do you pray as a family?
Besides meals?*

How important is prayer in your family?

IN THE WORD

Make sure everyone has a Bible or a device with a Bible on it. Have everyone start off looking up Matthew 6:6-15. Read the verse aloud.

GOD FIRST

HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

*Our Father in heaven, **hallowed be your name**, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Matthew 6:5-15

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

What are some names of God? Which is your favorite?

What is your family's rule about saying "God!" or "Oh My God"?

READ

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Exodus 20:7



When we pray as family, we are praying to and in God's name. If we use God's name in other ways in our home, does that teach our children that God is first place?



"Navigating Family Priorities" means talking to and about God with respect.

GOD FIRST

YOUR KINGDOM COME

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, **your kingdom come**, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Matthew 6:5-15

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

What does that phrase mean?

Is it more about us going to heaven or heaven coming to us?

READ

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Mark 1: 14-15



TIP

Navigating Family Priorities" means having a spiritual perspective on our priorities that reflect the fact that the kingdom of God is here and now

STUDY OUTLINE

YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, **your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Matthew 6:5-15

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

What is the consequence for disobedience in your home?

Why is there consequence for your children not doing what they are asked?

READ

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."

Luke 22:39-44

ASK

Why is this such a powerful verse in considering what and who is most important in your family?

TIP

"Navigating Family Priorities" is about accepting that what we want, what is easiest or what is going to make us look good is not always God's will.

DIGGING DEEPER

ADDITIONAL STUDY

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Matthew 19:16-24

REFLECTION

Ask the following questions of the group:

Are you putting other things in front of your own spiritual life? How about your children's spiritual life?

Is fun, success, monetary and material things, and making sure your kids are happy keeping you from being in church, attending ministries?

Are those things cutting in on your spiritual time at home?

Are you praying regularly?

Are you praying regularly with your spouse?

Do you have a regular, consistent time of prayer and devotions with your children?

TRY

It is time for you as a parent to consciously make God, His Kingdom and the Spiritual health of your family a priority. God, His will, and His blessings should be honored in your family.

TIP

"Life is Simple" [youtube.com/watch?v=xVEx-q7Zdzeg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVEx-q7Zdzeg)

SMALL GROUP #2

Have everyone break-up into small groups of 8-10, allowing parents to choose for themselves each week how they want to divide up and whether they want to have the same groups each week.

SHARE

- *Introduce yourself and your family. How many kids do you have and what ages? How long have you attended our church?*
- *Did you have a time you prayed for an object or Christmas gift growing up? Did you get it?*
- *What are some prayer practices or habits you have in your home? Is there a particular time of day or time that you pray or pray with your children? What is yours or your family's biggest struggle in finding and having a prayer time?*
- *Have you found a great resource or book that you have read or used with your children to develop a deeper spiritual life or prayer life?*

DISCUSS

PRAYER

- *What is the hardest part of 'The Lord's prayer' to pray? Why?*
- *Why do you think prayer is a struggle with so many families?*

PRIORITIES

- *Being real, is it ever a struggle to get up on a Sunday morning and get to church?*
- *Do you struggle to make the time or make the choice to prioritize God with your family and children?*

RELATIONSHIPS

- *What is your family's biggest spiritual struggle right now?*
- *How do you think deeper, more regular family prayer, would change your family life, relationships, and priorities?*

PRAY

Take turns praying for your family and children. Think of one need or area in your child's life that we can pray over.

TAKE HOME #2

PLAN

Plan the next week (7 days) to schedule 7 times to sit down as a family to open the Bible together and have a few minutes of prayer, even if it is 15 minutes before bed or a couple minutes over breakfast before school.

Have a time this week to talk to your kids about prayer, going through the "Lord's Prayer" together, explaining each section.

ASK

Ask your children about what prayer means to them.

Allow them to ask you questions about prayer.

APPLY

Have your children come up with a list of prayer requests and praises for the week. Post them on the refrigerator.

Challenge each other to pick one thing from the list every time you go the refrigerator and take 15-30 seconds to say a quick prayer to God about that item.

