

FAMILY TIME—THE MISSING INGREDIENT

INTRODUCTION

Family time is a special time that involves the whole family. That definitely means **the father as the head of the home**. God has designed you the father to be the head. This lecture is called “Family Time, the Missing Ingredient.” Yes, it is missing! Is your family having a good family time that binds and bonds the family together? It is missing in many Christian homes and in the homes of unbelievers it is almost totally non-existent. Somehow children are expected to just grow up and be beautiful. Satan knows that is a farce, that does not happen, that is not a reality. Family time must **be created**. If it is not, it will be the missing ingredient to a successful future generation. Already many present generations are gathering that unfortunate fruit of this missing ingredient. Now I would just like to share with you a very special little poem that is so appropriate and so good. It speaks to my own heart. It is entitled “*Daddy, Would You Play with Me a Little Bit?*”

I. “DADDY, WOULD YOU PLAY WITH ME A LITTLE BIT?”

“Tomorrow night he’ll play with me,”
That’s what the young girl said,
As she slowly climbed the lonely stairs
And put herself to bed.
“I know my daddy loves me,”
She kept saying in her head.
“He’s such a very busy man
And he must work instead.”

But somehow way down deep inside
She knew that it was true,
That tomorrow may not ever come-
For next day’s busy too.
But still she keeps on dreaming
That soon the day will come
When daddy will have time for her
And then they’ll have some fun.

Still, weeks pass by and turn to months
And months turn into years.
The little girl is waiting still
Although it is with tears.
She’s growing up, her life has changed
And she has teenage fears.

“Oh, why won’t daddy talk with me?”
“I’ll talk with you tomorrow night,
I’m awfully tired right now.
You know I really am concerned
But can’t find time somehow.”
So she slowly climbs the stairs
Her tender heart so crushed,
By all the years she’s been put off
By a daddy always rushed.

Oh, Christian friend don’t hesitate
To spend an hour or two,
With a child our Lord has sent your way-
It will help the both of you.
When your days on earth shall end
You’ll have no heartfelt sorrow
About the many times you said,
“I’ll play, or talk tomorrow.”

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II. THE NEED

A. A common failure — In the hurry of modern life, family time is lost.

Families no longer work together on the farm or in a business.

Each goes his own way with his own interests.

TV, computer and other activities are forcing their way into our homes and stealing time from our families.

B. A recognized Need — Families are breaking apart. Values are breaking down.

Working mothers. Divorce is entering our churches. Christian family traditions are lacking in many homes of new believers who are converted out of the world.

C. A Sought Answer — Families are seeking the answer for that missing ingredient and how we can bring it back into our homes, because it was God's desire.

God gave us children, children that grow up slowly. Eighteen years it takes to raise a young adult. God wanted these children to be with us and have this family interaction. He wanted us fathers and mothers to treasure each of the different stages of their lives as a special moment. God wants to bring this back and we want to share with you fathers some ideas and possibilities about how to bring this treasure back into your home.

III. GREAT ENEMIES

There are great enemies to the family time:

A. Monkey Collecting

Some fathers pick up a lot of someone else's responsibilities instead of giving your time to the family. Spending extra time at the office doing little things that were left undone. Leading a spiritual activity someone else was supposed to do.

B. Misplaced priorities

Some fathers feel that somehow the family will just take care of itself, and put other tasks ahead of them. "If I run the church, or do something spiritual, God will take care of my children." But **you** are the father that God has given them.

C. Neglect

Some fathers are just not interested in family life and children. Children are messy and can be irritating. But how can you as father be their spiritual head if you don't want to be involved personally?

D. Fatigue

Often fathers are just too tired from overwork to give any time. Maybe life needs to be re-evaluated and readjusted. Maybe you have a few jobs that God didn't give you.

E. TV- Computer

What looks like family time involves no relationship at all. It doesn't center around you the father and your values, but on the world's values, and there is no interaction between you as family members.

(Dear father, sit down a moment and count the number of offences against the 10 commandments)

F. Satan

He will do anything to break down your relationship with your wife and children, and he is especially targeting families of Christian leaders. He "seeks whom he can devour." If he can break down your family it is a major defeat in your effectiveness in ministry. *(A church is as strong as its families)*

IV. THE WORKING PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY TIME

I want to share a few of these principles. I will not highlight them or illustrate them because they need to be straightforward and you need to have them clearly down and later on I will be sharing some specific suggestions. These principles are very important. You the father and husband with your wife should memorize them. Then share them with neighbors and others. Preach on them in church and in small groups.



- Family time won't exist unless you as husband and father plan it.
- Quality –time with wife and children is the goal.
- Family affection and togetherness is not inherited, it is developed and can be learned.
- Working together. Family members working together can be a wonderful fellowship and training time.
- As father involve your wife, children and all family members in family plans. Otherwise you will end up doing work for those who don't even appreciate it.
- Blessed is the father whose kids plays together (as well as prays together.)
- Approach is the key to any activity.
- Full-hearted participation is what they want (more than any gift—they want you – the father!)
- Now is the time for you the father to establish family traditions and memories.
- Variety is the key.

V. SOME SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

A. Beginning a Family Time notebook of ideas

This is an excellent idea! Make a special Family Time Notebook and begin writing down all the family activities that you as husband and father can think of. Naturally you include the children and your wife and together you begin to make a list of possible ideas that you can do. Later on you can categorize them according to the season or according to indoor activities, or outdoor activities and so on.

B. Establishing “Family Council”

This is an excellent idea that many fathers with their wives and children have used successfully. It gives an opportunity once a week for about one hour after supper or so for the children to really tell how they feel about what is happening in and around the family. Or what they think ought to happen or about priorities that are in their mind. For those of you who are used to leading small discussion groups –that should be easy because you can put all the small group discussion principles to good use. You keep your mouth shut and you just ask questions and let them talk, then make written notes about what was said. This is a very valuable time of expression for the children. Afterwards you can end it with a special snack made by your wife or some ice cream or other treat.

C. Maintain daily family devotions

Family devotions led by fathers are a crucial part of family life, something that the children enjoy. We've read special children's Bible storybooks when our children were younger. One special tradition that I learned as a young man was about the family kneeling around the table after breakfast. First, they would read the Bible and then read a little devotional booklet with that and then they would kneel down for prayer. Everyone in the family would pray audibly at the same time. It was like a chorus of voices rising up to heaven. It is beautiful and very helpful. The younger children usually finish first and then just listen to each other or listen to mom and dad. It is a wonderful system because the children learn to pray from their mom and dad as they listen to them. Afterwards the family always sang a song of praise to God before everyone went on his own way.

D. Set aside a “family night”

We encourage you husbands and fathers to have a special family night weekly with a plan for family togetherness. It is excellent to have a family night when the children are home from school and to do a special activity as a family together--not individual activities, and not involving other people--just you, your wife, and children.

E. Get the family to bed for adequate rest

Going to bed on time is a problem in many homes. Many families have difficulties with it and bedtime just happens whenever it happens. That means in the morning different people wake up sleepy, tired, and grouchy. They wake up at the very last minute and need to be rushed off to school or kindergarten. There is hardly time for a good breakfast, let alone for family devotions. Doctors tell us that going to bed at a regular time is one of the best health principles you can employ and it gives you an opportunity to do what Jesus did. He rose early in the morning, went for a walk, had a time of prayer, and then he was ready for His day. But He had already had time for God and He had time for Himself.

F. Facing the TV problem

TV brings things into your home that you would never allow a guest to bring into your home. If a guest came and he started cursing and swearing, using bad language and sharing evil ideas or dirty stories you would ask him immediately to stop and not do that in front of the children. Yet, the TV is on and left on, or is playing uncontrolled when father is not home. It is an unwanted guest bringing about worldly philosophies and sowing seeds of evil thoughts and greed. It's totally contrary to Christian standards. My wife and I are so thankful that God spared us from ever having a TV in our home even though kind people donated TVs to us.

G. Stressing “TOGETHERNESS”

Togetherness is the whole idea of family time—together--and it's wonderful. Daddy is having time to let a child sit on his lap or another child to crawl over him and play with his hair. Children just love it when daddy reads a little story and they want to hear the same story over and over and over again. Their daddy is this big hero. As the children go to bed and lay down, peacefully sleeping with smiles upon their faces, the father knows he has been successful. He has become god in the eyes of his children. What a representation of Jesus Christ! What joy that togetherness brings to everyone, not the least your precious wife!

H. Have at least one meal all together daily (supper if possible)

Supper if possible because then work is over and life tends to be more relaxed. Many evenings this will not work out if you are involved as a course coach because your ministry is in the evenings. We then recommend breakfast time in the morning. There is nothing better than a good relaxed full breakfast meal to start the day out with, —for all of you, the hubby, your wife, and for your children. School lunch or other snacks may come late in the day and it's a long time. Take time for breakfast. With that comes the opportunity to have devotions in the morning. It takes a father to plan and organize. It means going to bed on time but God will bless it.



I. Build happy family traditions (“Special” foods, games, activities, days, seasons, places, nights, expressions, etc.)

Once a week have something “special.” It doesn't have to cost much extra in either money or time. It just takes some thoughtful planning – it takes an expression of father love. Together with your wife you can do it. Build traditions that are meaningful for your family. It gives everyone something to look forward to.

J. Organizing the house — a place for everything and everything in its place

Yes, life is life and we have children and each person brings with him certain clutter, certain waste products, and certain possessions. Messiness is a normal thing and your poor wife can't always keep up. When there is a special guest or if she has to be away or if there is illness of some sort, then it becomes difficult. But you as the husband can make it a priority on the family day to prepare a treat for your wife and children.

Maybe you are up in the morning before they are up and you begin to pick up things, and you just put things away. You arrange the shelves and organize the books and put up the newspapers and gather up the socks or toys that were left and then the children wake up. Oh, the apartment is so nice and clean, "You did that daddy?" "Yes, because today is our family day and we are celebrating each other and we want to remember that we have a special apartment that God has given us. We are proud of it and we are thankful for it." There is a place for everything and everything is in its place. If you do that you will after a little while sense that people begin to deeply appreciate it. If you do that for three months and then it's missed a couple of times someone in the family will start talking about it because they've learned to appreciate it.

K. Keep family time materials, supplies, etc. accessible for immediate use

You need to have a place for family time materials. You just are going to have to have some things ready; some supplies or games, or some pens and paper. They need to be accessible for instant use. Have a little shelf or a place where normally the children can't reach, where they know "That is for us when daddy comes and we are going to do something together." That's where the puzzles are or the games like chess or other things. Then when you are going to do an activity it's there. It's ready and you don't have to say, "Oh no. We don't have that now?" or, "What happened to it?" or, "Where is it?" or, "It's too late to buy it." It is there for immediate use when you need it.

L. Entertaining others

To have some other people occasionally in your family time creates a whole new dynamic, a whole new atmosphere. If you have school children encourage them to bring home a friend, one at a time. That friend doesn't know what family time is; they don't have it in their home. That friend doesn't know some of the games and you need to be patient. You may need to explain the rules again or close an eye sometimes and let a child play along even though he breaks some of the rules and doesn't understand it. Let the child win some of the activities that you are involved in even if he is just new at it. You will see that it will create a whole new dynamic. Maybe once every couple months bring a young adult or single friend who is lonely. They will be so appreciative of that. Maybe your parents would like to participate or maybe they just want to come and watch what you are doing for a family activity. Entertain some others. Not regularly, but occasionally, and not too many--just one or two at a time.

M. Vacations (Plan and Save all year)

Vacation is a big event. If you don't make use of it wisely, it's gone before you know it and you wonder what happened. Do you realize that you as husband and father have only have about ten to twelve valuable family vacations in your whole life? You may think, "How can that be?" Well, the first five years usually the little children don't remember very much from a vacation. Oh, they may remember that they played on the beach on the Black Sea, but very little else. It's about at school age when they begin to value some of these vacations and to participate in them, to relish, to look forward to them, and to make plans together with daddy. Then when they are eighteen they are gone. The army comes and takes them; college or university comes and takes them. Maybe there is a husband and he took her away. Maybe a bride came along and your son is gone. You have about twelve years to take these pictures, to enjoy these special family vacations together. Plan well, dear fathers, because life goes by very fast.

N. Visits to relatives

Children look forward to visiting their relatives. Treat your relatives well. Take them a little gift. Don't just barge in and make yourself a burden. If you have a couple of daughters that are in their early teen years, have them bake something or make something. Have your wife take a salad or part of the meal so that there is very little work for your hostess to do and then stay as long as it is comfortable. But don't stay too long. Leave when they are saying, "Oh, do you have to go already?" That's the best time to leave. When you say, "Well, we need to go," and they reply, "Yes, yes, I guess it's time," then you know you stayed too long. You as head of the home make sure you know the bus schedule to get home and so forth, so that there will be no particular problems.

O. Hobbies (Active, or Creative, or Collecting) (Hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, camping, tennis, basketball, horseback riding, golf, needlepoint, ceramics, flower arranging, gardening, stamps, coins, antiques, reading, playing musical instruments, photography, tropical fish, pets, etc.)

These can become ongoing things that children will want to carry on even by themselves.

P. Shopping (Grocery, Dept, Window)

Sometimes just regular shopping with the kids can be a fun activity when all are involved. The children skip along, you the husband carries the groceries and the wife has a break from doing it all by herself. Let your good wife be the supervisor. She probably knows best, so let the roles be reversed right now. You are following her instructions. You say, "Yes, that's okay. Yes, that's fine. Go ahead, buy it all." Naturally you will carry it home and the children can each carry something that is their favorite food.

Department Store visits

Perhaps you just want with your wife and kids go shopping in a department store. There are all kinds of stores and things to see. Visit different stores. Maybe you don't want to buy anything specific. I've gone lots of times with my wife just to look around and see all the new things that are coming to our area even though we had no interest in buying.

Window shopping

That's another activity. Just walking along the streets with your wife and children around you looking in the windows of the different stores saying, "Wow, isn't that nice?" Just counting your blessings with all the things God has already provided for you. With an ice cream in your hand it can be real fun. God has been good to you. You are not living in a primitive country. Enjoy His blessings.

Q. Routine family work (Cooking, dishes, clothes, cleaning, car, farm work, etc.)

Yes, even routine family work can be turned into something special. Cooking for example. Each of you husbands probably has a specialty you can cook. I've heard of some husbands who enjoy doing that and are good at it. (But clean up the dirty pots and pans. Don't leave that for your wife!) For some husbands who are not so good at cooking, it might be more fun to do it together with your wife. Do the dishes for your wife occasionally. Clean up together with the children: you wash, and they dry. There is always cleaning to do around the house and it's fun occasionally for you husbands to help with that. It's such a joy for a wife once a quarter to see her husband being involved and see him doing that. There is the car that needs to be cleaned out and washed. It's a wonderful activity together with the children. It's a good spring, summer, and autumn outdoors activity. Make sure they get all wet and squirt each other with water and get dirty. They can take a little bath afterwards. There is farm work, chores with animals, taking care of rabbits, goats, and other pets. Garden activities can be really educational with lots of spiritual lessons and great fun. The main point is for daddy to focus on the children's level and make it a fun activity, not just work. Be sure to control your temper when something goes wrong, like a dish gets broken, etc. Gal. 5:23. These are normal occurrences.

R. Sightseeing drives

Take a little drive to go and see the countryside. Perhaps there is a bus that can take you to a nearby village or nearby monastery, or some other special building. Maybe just go for a little visit to some town center. Just going to a little village and driving back again can be interesting. You can do it by car if you have one or you can take public transportation. It does not have to be a frequent thing. It might not be super exciting to you maybe because you travel a lot, but your wife and children don't. For them it's a special outing and then they get to see what daddy is doing all the time when he has to work. Take a little picnic lunch along or invent an activity to play in the snow, etc.

S. Revivals and special meetings

Take your children from time to time to special events, perhaps an evangelistic meeting, a special revival for believers, some special music events. These are not always interesting for children but you can explain it to them and it is family time together. If afterwards there is time for some candy or cookies at home, or getting to stay up late as a special privilege it can be a pleasant special activity for all.

T. Sitting together as a family at church

This is real physical family togetherness. This is our family! What a wonderful thing it is to have them all sitting in a row, you the father, mother and all the children. We've tried to do that whenever we could, whenever I didn't have to preach and wasn't engaged otherwise. It's great to have a child on each side that you can put your arm around and whisper little things to about the sermon.

Encourage your older children to take some notes on the message, then afterwards discuss the message at home, and younger children can draw a picture about the sermon topic. There are some real spiritual benefits. Maybe memorize some new songs; maybe even do an activity together in the church.

U. Games at home (Ping-Pong, caroms, checkers, Aggravation, Scrabble, Bible games, etc.)

Ask other families what games they have. Always be on the lookout for additional family games. Gather as many games and activities as you can. Variety is important and over time the family tastes and needs change.



V. Walks

Walks are very healthy. Just put on some old boots and follow the creek. Go up the creek and keep on going and going, and discover all the things along the banks. In springtime, especially when the frogs are singing and the birds are having nests with young ones, the grass is green, and the ducks are out swimming.

Interact with the kids. It's just delightful. Again in the autumn time when the products are full-grown and the colors are changing, then the flowers and other things around the water's edge make a walk especially delightful.

W. Picnics

Picnics are a favorite of mine. It means putting some food in a basket and then just going someplace where you can just lay down on a piece of newspaper together with a child. I'm usually cooped up inside an office. For me it's just great to be outdoors, to lie down, look up in the sky and to see the clouds float by. It's great to feel the fresh breeze and to deeply breathe in that air. I enjoy the special food and really relax with my wife, walking hand-in-hand just talking.

X. Activities where one member is participating (sports, programs, etc.)

When your children are participating in sports activities make sure you attend whatever events you can. If they are participating in a school program, or some other event, **be there**. Do whatever you can to change your schedule and **honor that child**. Let them know that what is important in their lives is important in yours.

Y. Markets, special sales

We have all kind of markets and it's wonderful to just explore them. You can explore the pet market or you can explore a special import market, or you can explore the hardware market where they sell tools and bolts and nuts and different things that you need for repairs. The children will have dozens of questions when they go along, "Daddy, what's that? What is that for? What do we do with that?" and so on. There is the food market. From time to time just go visit another food market where you normally don't shop. People are listing all kind of things for sale. Perhaps you just want to go and visit some people that are selling all their furniture. You don't want to buy anything, you just want to see their apartment, see what they have, see what they want to sell, find out how much they ask for it. It gives you an idea of how other people live and the value they place on these material things, and it gives you an opportunity to go home and to compare a little bit, and thank God for the things that He has given to you already.

Z. Bicycling

That's another favorite of mine. I've taken all kinds of short and longer bicycle trips with my family just for a day or for half a day. I've gone slowly with my younger children. I've ridden quite extensively with my older ones. I've had special bike rides with my wife and we've had a number of unique experiences that have just been funny. I've done some long distance biking with my son, all the way from Kiev in Ukraine to Amsterdam, Holland, 2000 kilometers. I've done another long distance bike ride with a good friend of mine. We rode all the way from Kiev to Novosibirsk in central Siberia, 4000 kilometers. I would like to do it some more. It's wonderful.

AA. Jogging

It is amazing what jogging will do for you. You begin to sweat, you begin to breathe wildly, puff — puff — puff. You rub your face and feel prickly and you kick out your legs. Perhaps your wife can do it also. It might open an exciting new world of physical activity for you both. It's a splendid activity to do with a growing son or daughter who in their mid-teens and want to flex their muscles. While jogging some people memorize Bible verses, pray or listen to recorded scripture passages. Warm-up and cool-off times are great time frames to bond with a partner or a child.

BB. *Bus ministry and other visitation*

Many churches have buses and mini busses or other ways to bring in handicapped and other people. This provides for excellent opportunities to make follow up visits to these homes with your wife and children and build strong relationships.

CC. Puzzles

Puzzles are an interesting activity. There are two kinds of puzzles; there are word puzzles which you see in newspapers or magazines sometimes and there are also picture puzzles. It is especially appealing to children to put a nice picture together. The puzzle can be broken up again and then you can do it over again. It's a very relaxing activity. It is actually very cheap because you can re-do these puzzles many times.

DD. Music at home (singing, instruments, etc.)

Our family does not have music instruments but I just love it when occasionally after supper our family decides they want to sing a bit. They sit around for maybe half an hour and just sing to their hearts content. It is always a thrill to me.

EE. Reading good books

Read good books yourself. Share them with other people. Sometimes my wife reads to me a little story at night before we go to bed, sometimes I read to her. There have been times when she said, "Please, read to me. I just want to hear your voice." Dear father please, do read to your family. A family reading time is enjoyed by all. It gives you new things to talk about with your family. Read an inspirational biography together. Children can color pictures or sew or do something else while a story is being read.

FF. Family films or videos

There are many videos now; Christian videos and other good videos are now available. You have the opportunity to make use of them again and again. Let your older children make notes on some of these science films or the Jesus film and then take time to have a snack and discuss together what they've learned from it. It is one way to develop them in their Christian life.



GG. Innovative healthy snacks

There are all kinds of snacks that you as father can have for children. Have healthy snacks, snacks with a little bit of sausage or some cheese, or some fruit. Apples last almost all winter long and quite often are very cheap. Later on in the winter they become maybe a little bit soft, then you can cut them, make a little bit of chocolate syrup and dip them into the chocolate syrup. It's delicious. Dipping into some jam or honey also works.

HH. Making items to be given or sold later

That's again an activity that the whole family can enter into. Yes, the children won't make something that is perfect but it may be a good gift for someone on their level or for someone just below their level. Maybe they have a friend who is one or two grades below them and that friend would appreciate it because it's homemade. Homemade gifts carry the value that "the person who was working on this was thinking of me."

II. Sunday as a special day

In our family this has always been a tradition. Sunday is God's **holy** day. It's a special day of rest. We minimize any and every activity. My wife prepares as much of the meals as she can on Saturday. It's a day of rest. It was God's primary concern that we would have one day of rest. Then as a secondary priority, it is a day to worship God also, a day to go to church and worship Him. But the primary issue is a day of rest and relaxation, a day of enjoyment. It is God's very specific gift to the Christian community.

JJ. Home dedication

It is an important event for people to relocate to a new apartment or to a new place. Naturally they want to show their new place to friends and relatives. Many people physically dedicate their place to God and ask His blessing upon their family there. It is a good opportunity to invite many neighbors to an opening party. Such a party gives you an official debut into the community. Use that opportunity as a special event for evangelizing the neighbors. Have the pastor read a fitting scripture passage and say an appropriate prayer. Each family member can share a poem, song or reading. Provide a tiny take home memento for guests. Use the anniversary again a year later. Celebrate that you've been there now a year and count the blessings that God has given you in this new place. Maybe how you have renovated the place, redecorated it, how much better it is now than when you first came.

KK. Big Birthday celebrations

Have special birthday celebrations for a child or even for yourself when you have reached a special mark in life. In our family we have several children and we found it too much to plan a birthday party for everybody every year. It costs too much money. It took too much time and too much energy, and it wasn't possible. We developed a system by which we would have regular annual birthday celebrations but every five years we would have a major birthday celebration. We called it "a crown birthday" and then the children could invite all their friends and there was a big party. One of the highlights was that dad, which is me, would decorate a very special birthday cake for them. I've created a train out of cake, an airplane, a boat with sails, a doll, a burning house, a sports activity, a windmill. That was just a highlight for the whole family and it became a special tradition, unique to our family. Birthdays are a time for dads / husbands to focus on that individual and make them feel special and cherished. It is a great opportunity to have your own family traditions.

LL. Visiting shut-ins

If you want to be appreciated and want your children to develop compassion, there is almost nothing better you can do than visit the shut-ins, especially the invalids and handicapped. For every invalid or handicapped person there are at least four others who are burdened down by caring for that person. They would be so appreciative if you came to share and lighten that burden a little bit. It's great to do something special for a handicapped person who normally is difficult to love. Especially the mentally handicapped are so needy. It's been my privilege to be in a church where they had a special ministry to handicapped children. On the platform there was a group of mentally retarded children singing, "Oh, how I love Jesus." and then telling us of how they used to curse and swear until they got saved and now they love Jesus. They can't do anything else in life, they can't ever make a major contribution to society, they can't ever even read the Bible but they got saved and love Jesus.

MM. Photo albums (family and for each child)

It's fun to make a family photo album. Besides pictures, you can put in special decorations or write special things underneath. Perhaps one child is good at making decorations, another child maybe knows calligraphy and how to make special writing and make it artistic. Let it be a family activity once a quarter to update that album. Later on perhaps you and your wife can make an album for each child individually. Our family did that just before our older children were old enough to leave the home. We took the old family album completely apart, took out the pictures and divided them up as for each child. Then during a summer vacation each child took one hour a day and developed their own tasteful album.

NN. Family memories Recordings

Gather your wife and kids once or twice a year just to tape some precious memories. The children will love it, and it's good to have the recorded voices. The following year you take time and you listen to these

recordings and then ask every family member how he has progressed and developed. Then do a new session with them. These can be wonderful valuable memories that they will treasure later on in life.

OO. Zoo trips

This is another activity our family does quite regularly; at least four times a year we visit a zoo. We are so acquainted with our small zoo that we almost know the animals by name and personality, they probably know us too and there is nothing special about that. It is just fun to go and be outdoors in nature in the springtime when things are flowering and baby animals are born. It's great to visit the zoo at other times also. Even in winter, going inside to see the reptiles, the tropical birds and fish is a nice family activity.

PP. Admitting when wrong and asking for prayer

This is something that we've practiced in our family, and I had to do it many times myself with my children. I've made many mistakes and I've just had to let them know that I was not a perfect daddy. I think it's been good for my children to see my shortcomings and to realize that I am aware of my shortcomings. God is never completely finished with me as the father in their life and I think it has bonded us together.

QQ. Loving hugs and squeezes

Be sure to give your children hugs when they go to bed or when they leave to go to school. Hug your wife when you are leaving and give her a big smooch on the cheek to let her know that's the last thing you can do till you meet again. It is so good and everybody needs physical contact. Lack of body contact is one of the reasons why teenagers end up in misbehavior. They cannot touch the opposite sex, that's bad for them, and it's not appropriate many times for boys to touch boys and so 'touch' is missing in their life and they desperately need it. You, as the father and mother can supply that need.

RR. Complimentary words

"That tastes good." "Thank you for cleaning this shirt for me." or, "I appreciate you doing that again. I know you've done it many times." Husbands be quick to compliment and slow to criticize. As the head of the home create an attitude of gratitude in your home.

SS. Dates at home

We are talking here about husband and wife relationships. It is so good to have the children visiting the grandparents or someone else for a night and you have a special night at home, a special party. Or, maybe the children go to bed early one night. You specifically got them up early and they are tired early and they go to bed early with something special, they are happy; you know they are sleeping and you just begin to enjoy each other. You need to have an occasional special time just for each other and it's easier if you have a private bedroom. You can enjoy each other physically. That's important. Enjoy each other's body from the toes of your feet to the top of your head, every part of it. Explore your bodies and marvel how God has made them so beautiful. Enjoy each other emotionally as you giggle and laugh together. Enjoy each other mentally as you share things you have learned about other topics. Enjoy each other spiritually as you share what God is teaching you and the new discoveries you are making in your life.



This has been a multitude of ideas on creating a family unit, a bond, security. What else can we say?

VI. YOUR FAMILY IS WORTH IT — WORK AT IT!"

Yes it is work to make family time. Remember: "It is the missing ingredient" and it's not going to happen automatically. Perhaps it has been YOU the father and husband that was the "missing ingredient. Most worldly people are occupied with their own selfish interests. As a Christian family you need to work at it. Your family is worth it. You are building a future Christian generation. You are building a future Christian nation by establishing whole new values and traditions. Work on it!

VII. DO IT NOW — THE PRECIOUS YEARS ARE SLIPPING THROUGH YOUR FINGERS!!”

As father knows and realize that these precious years go through your fingers so fast! Every three or four years they are gone. That's right. The pre-school years, doing something with your children while they are so preciously innocent. There are about three years from the time they learn to walk and toddle and you can do something with them till it's school time. From school time on it's a whole different child with different interests, which demands other family relationships. Before you know it that's over and they reach puberty and they don't know who they are, and they don't know who they want to be. Do they want to be an adult; do they still want to be a child? Their body is changing whether they like it or not. They have to go along with it. Then there are the pre-adult years and suddenly within a couple of months, they have left home and they come and visit with a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law, and that's a whole new relationship again. A bit later there come grandchildren but it might not be very long before you are too old to enjoy them. The Bible talks about the years when you are too old to enjoy it, life may be bitter and dry and difficult. Then you can no longer enjoy these things. So do enjoy each of life's special moments now because they are slipping through your fingers and that one particular element of life will never come back. Your children will be with you 18 years. The Bible says; Children are God's gift. God has loaned these little people to you for 18 years and He watching what you as father will do with His gift during these 18 years. Make the best of it!!!

VIII. YOU WILL NEVER REGRET THE TIME SPENT WITH YOUR FAMILY — BUT YOU MAY LIVE TO REGRET THE TIME YOU DIDN'T!

I remember when we first came to Kiev, to Ukraine. There was a team of foreign young people with us who were doing another ministry. These young people, being single and being lonely in another country with another language, and without their friends and relatives, needed some time together to relax. Weekly they would come one evening, sometimes two evenings, to our family and I thank my wife that she was willing to organize and do that. She would cook a meal for twelve or more people twice a week. They had been on the train sleeping and had little to eat, and sometimes they had some problems with the food. They would come and would just eat and eat as young men can do. Even the girls enjoyed that special meal, and then they would just hang around giggling and laughing. They would play games, just talk, and do things together till late in the evening. Every time when I think of it I'm just so thrilled that we had that opportunity. It was creating a family time for those who didn't have any. And it contributed to our own family because our children had other lives to be involved with in the context of their own home and family.

IX.YOUR PERSONAL 'FAMILY-TIME' INVENTORY:

As father and head of your home it is helpful to quarterly make an inventory of what is happening in your family time. Write down some of the special highlights that occurred, some insights gained or new bonds established. Reviewing these family insights helps you to recognize the benefits and blessings of "family time" It can provide you with input for counseling other families with children of similar ages. Later it also gives you fatherly info to help your children when they have questions about raising their own children. This record can even help you to do these things with your grandchildren. There are two things that you should mention when you are making a family time inventory:

A. Things your family does together:

Simply make a list of all the things you are doing together as a family. Just making that list will become very impressive. Later on during special anniversaries or special gatherings you can reiterate some of these points and everybody will begin to say, "Yes, I remember. Yes, and we did that and that, I remember, and I was..." and so on. It's a memory that will last for the whole lifetime of your children.

B. Things your family does individually

Different family members have individual things they like to do, like hobbies or sports. Each of you as daddy and mommy should take time with these children individually. Make a list of these things and just enjoy how

God is letting your family grow and develop and become individuals who are appreciating His creation, His uniqueness to the fullness of their being. That's what family time is all about.

CONCLUSION

As a man, as a male you have probably realized that God has created a tremendous amount of beauty in this world and in the universe. From the tiniest, microscopic thing to the greatest telescopic thing in the universe there is so much beauty that we can never understand it or discover it. It is fabulous! Why did He do that? Well, because He is God, He wanted to, He enjoyed it and He thought that we would enjoy it, that it would be a blessing to us. I hope that you will make it a blessing to your family. Thank you for giving me the privilege of sharing this lecture on 'Family Time.' I hope that from now on **you** the daddy will no longer be the missing ingredient and let's all say, "Hallelujah." to that. Shall we? "Hallelujah." Praise God! Amen, and thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus. Thank you for my wife, thank you for my children, thank you for this opportunity that we have now as fathers, for a family time. We love you, we celebrate you and we worship you!

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by New Life for Churches. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- Based on the information that you gleaned during the discussion develop a family time notebook.
- Set up a specific time each week for family time. Write down when and what you did for each week
- If your children are old enough (age 5 is a good time to start), develop a family council