**DEVELOPING PRAYER IN YOUR FAMILY**

If we want our children to become Jesus' disciples, teaching them to pray is a mandatory part of their growing years. Too many parents leave it up to the church to fill this role. It's impor­tant that children learn to pray from their parents, in their homes. This way it becomes part of their everyday lives, as natural as breathing. Here are some ideas to help families grow their prayer lives together.

### 1. Pray together as a family before bedtime.

This can be a source of great intimacy for your family, as you bring together your concerns and celebrations and pray for each other. It can give your children a wonderful sense of the importance of praying with others. It will also show them the emphasis you as parents have put on prayer. If some­one in your family is experiencing health or emotional problems, why not have the whole family place their hands on that person as they pray? My son often lays his hands on my head and prays for me when I am sick. It makes him feel good to do something he knows will help me. He is also comforted when his father and I pray for him in the same way.

### 2. Let your prayers with your children be spontaneous.

The next time one of your children comes to you with a worry or concern, pray together right then. It can be a very short and simple prayer, but you will be teaching him or her a very sig­nificant lesson about trusting God with *all* concerns. Another great time to pray spontaneously is when you are having an argument with your child. When you feel like the anger is flowing on one side or both, stop and pray. You'll be amazed at how quickly atti­tudes can change.

### 3. Ask your children to pray for you.

Give your children a specific prayer concern of your own, and ask them to pray about it. This will communicate to your children how important you feel their prayers are and how impor­tant prayer is in general.

### 4. Make a family prayer journal.

Begin a family prayer journal, in which everyone takes turns writing their prayer concerns. Make sure to look back and record answered prayers so you can thank God for them. This is a great way for your children to remem­ber all the answers and blessings that God has provided.

—L. Wurzbacher, Webster, NY