



The Gathering
September 22, 2010

Faith and Family in Practice

Outline

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- Discipline and Instruction
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 - Faith Walks
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 - Faith Remembrances

Review

- The Gap Created by Some Church Models
- The Wall Erected in God's Redemptive Story
- Bridging the Gap/Tearing Down the Wall

Discipline and Instruction

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

The original word for "discipline" is παιδεία (*paideia*). It means the training of someone, particularly a child, in accordance with proper rules of conduct and behavior. It means training or disciplining; providing guidance with the intent of forming proper habits of behavior. The word also carries with it the idea of punishment for the purpose of improved behavior. Thus, *paideia* is the upbringing of a child to maturity through direction, teaching, guidance, and a certain measure of compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement resulting in the spiritual development of heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The original word for “instruction” is *νουθεσία* (*nouthesia*). It means warning or admonition. The first part of the word (*nou*) means mind, understanding, or reason. The second part of the word (*thesia*) means to place, lay, or set. Thus, it denotes a putting into the mind. It is the constraining and directing of a child toward right reason. It carries with it a training by mouth; a verbal training. It is giving admonition, authoritative council, and warning.

Discipline – training by act, deed, and compulsion.

Instruction – training by word, encouragement, and warning.

Teach the Word Diligently

⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Faith Talks (when you sit in your house)

A faith talk is a designated time, at least once a week, in which the household gathers for meaningful discussion and prayer around the Word of God. The household will include parents and children, but may also include invited friends and church family.

Faith talks are the primary vehicle for journeying through spiritual development as a family. These are sometimes called family devotions, family worship, family time, or some other term.

Faith talks should occur at least once a week. This creates habit, yet is not so frequent that it can become a burden for some.

Putting it into practice:

- Choose a time and place.
- Keep it simple (read, share, pray) or (read, pray, sing).
- Keep it short.
- Center on the Word.
- Involve everyone.
- Anticipate challenges.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Consider where your children are in life.
- Stay consistent.
- Use the weekly family worship guide on our website under “Resources.”

Faith Walks (when you walk by the way)

A faith walk is a spontaneous or planned discussion in the course of daily life that brings the Gospel into focus.

Everyday life brings opportunities to make God known to your children and to your church family. When you see a beautiful sunset or powerful storm, it's an opportunity to speak of God as Creator. When you go to the movies or see a program on television, it's an opportunity to talk about God's truth and the world's deception. When your child or church family member faces a particular struggle, it's an opportunity to speak about how God can meet every need according to His riches in heaven. When your child returns home from school or from an event, it's an opportunity to ask questions about how they reflected the character of Christ.

Putting it into practice:

- Be intentional.
- Look for opportunities to share truth.
- Ask probing questions.
- Reflect upon an activity.
- Bring up conversation based upon where your child is spiritually.
- Share your own spiritual reflections.
- Make time around meals for spiritual conversation.

Faith Bookends (when you lie down and rise)

Faith bookends are intentional times of dedication, blessing, and thanksgiving at the beginning and end of a day.

Two of the most important times of the day are just before bedtime and just after getting up from a night's sleep. The end of the day is a great opportunity to reflect upon the day and to give thanks for God's providence and work in your life and the lives of your children. The beginning of the day is a perfect time to give thanks for life and the opportunities that God will allow for you to honor Him and bring Him glory.

Putting it into practice:

- Reflect.
- Pray.
- Be brief.
- See your life as an offering.
- Keep the focus on God.
- Read a Psalm.

Faith Remembrances (bind them, wear them, write them)

Faith remembrances are important events, symbols, statements, traditions, etc. that help build spiritual reminders of God's work and Word, which can become foundational in the spiritual development of the home.

In our churches, we partake in the Lord's Supper or Communion in remembrance of what God has done through Jesus Christ. The Israelites celebrated numerous feasts in remembrance of God's work in setting them apart as His chosen people and redeeming them from Egyptian slavery.

In our homes, we can also create special remembrances of faith that will draw us back to the Word of God and to His work in our lives.

Putting it into practice:

- Take a child or your family on a special spiritual retreat.
- Go on a mission trip as a family.
- Develop a special family tradition around Christmas or Easter with rich spiritual meaning.
- Develop a family mission statement that can be framed and displayed.
- Set up a weekly or biweekly one-on-one meeting with your child at a special place for focused and meaningful discipleship.
- Discover, together as a family, a special Scripture that you can commit to memory and can dedicate yourselves to for the entire year.
- Celebrate special rites of passage with your children: baptism, purity, independence, graduation, etc.