

Introduction:

When God wanted to bless the world and save mankind, he began by separating out one family. **Genesis 18:18-19** says that God had chosen Abraham and his family to become a great nation. Through this family/nation God would bless the whole world. Family is important to God. One of God's most overlooked tools is your family. Are you aware that God can use your family to accomplish great things for His kingdom? But only if your family is plugged in. Is your family a praying family? Is your husband and father a prayer leader? Is your wife and mother a prayer partner? Are your children obeying prayers? **Psalm 127:1**, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." The only way the Lord will build your house, is if you ask Him. Do not believe the Lord is building your house if your family is not praying. You may be doing a lot of things. You may make lots of money. You may live in a nice house. You may drive nice cars. You may wear nice clothes. Your children may be excellent students or athletes. But if you are not praying, your house is not being built by the Lord and all you are doing is in vain. Therefore, the question is, "Is your family plugged in?"

Discussion:

- I. Husbands and fathers: Prayer Leaders.
 - A. Too many men like to quote **Ephesians 5:22-24** to get their wives to what the husbands want. Regrettably, men rarely acknowledge what this passage says to us. Husbands, we are to be to our wives what Christ is to the church. We are the leaders. Therefore, the question is how is your family's prayer life? Do not tell me your wife won't cooperate. Do not tell me your children's schedules. Tell me how your family's prayer life is going? Do you pray any more than at meals and a quick, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep..." at bedtime? Do you even do that? Men, we are at war here. **Ephesians 6:10-13** explains the battle. These hellish forces are not just attacking Christians in general. They are attacking us and our families in particular. As our families fight this battle, we are the leaders. Therefore we have to be the prayer leaders. We have to set the vision for victory through prayer for our family. We have to share that vision and get our family on board. We have to lead our family into battle through our own prayer example. Whether or not the Lord builds our homes depends on us.
 - B. When it comes to prayer, men, what is our role? Based on **Ephesians 5:23**, we need to ask what is Jesus' role in prayer for His church? That will tell us our role.
 1. Notice **Romans 8:34** and **Hebrews 7:25**. Jesus intercedes for His church. How much time do you spend praying on your family's behalf? How many prayers do you offer up for your wife? Do you ever thank God for her? If you do, do you ever mention specifics? Do you ever pray for her? Do you pray for her desires and needs? What about your children? Do you ever thank God for them? How many prayers do you offer up on their behalf? Here is the really tough question. When you pray for your wife and children, do you really pray for them or are you actually praying for yourself that God will make your wife and children what you want them to be? "Dear Lord, please help my wife be more submissive, less emotional and make her get off my back about the cluttered garage." **James 4:3** explains selfish prayers are unacceptable. **Philippians 2:3-4** says you should not be filled with selfishness. What is important to your family should become important to you. When you pray for them, pray for their needs and desires. Of course, above all, pray that God be glorified through your family.
 2. Secondly, in **Luke 11:1-13**, Jesus taught His disciples to pray. Do you teach your family to pray? Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them because they saw Him pray. Based on your example, would your family think they could learn to pray from you? Teach your family by example. Pray with them. Have a family prayer time. Let them hear you praise God and thank Him. Let them hear you thank God for them. Let them hear you confess your sins. Let them hear your petitions. Teach them to pray by instruction. Read the Bible with them,

making special note of the prayer passages and how they influence our prayers. Husbands and Fathers, you are the prayer leaders; you are responsible to pray with your wives and especially to bring up your children praying in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- C. Finally, take special note of **I Peter 3:7**. Do not believe you can do a bit of good as prayer leaders in your home if you are mistreating your wives, or your children for that matter. If you are allowing sin and bitterness to run rampant in your home, your prayers do not make it through your attic. Further, your family will see straight through to your hypocrisy and any leadership in prayer you may offer will fall flat. Get control of your life. Be a godly husband, a godly father and take up the mantle of prayer leader. Let the Lord build your house.

II. Wives and mothers: Prayer Partners.

- A. **Proverbs 14:1** says, "The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands." These are your choices. There is no middle ground. Either you are building your house or you are pulling it down with your own hands. But remember **Psalms 127:1**. You are only building your house if you are inviting the Lord to build it for you. Unless you are praying, you are pulling your house down. So many of you, wives, do so much for your families. You will work countless hours to provide materially. Then you come home to a typically unappreciative husband and children, to cook and clean. You run your kids around to all their events. You go over your children's homework and sometimes their Bible class lesson. You wash and iron your family's clothes. You burn the candle at both ends getting all that work done. But do you make any of it worthwhile by praying?
- B. Sisters, **Genesis 2:18** provides the overarching responsibility for your role in the home. Your duty is to be a helper to your husband, a partner. **Proverbs 31:12** puts it this way, "She does him good and not evil all the days of her life." The greatest good you can do for your husband is to pray with him and pray for him. Our culture has developed a competition mindset between husbands and wives. Regrettably, too often that competition produces bitterness and resentment in the home as husbands and wives compete for the prize of who adds the most, who does the most, who sacrifices the most and who has the toughest time. Satan fosters this competition. After all, if our family is fighting with itself, we have no time to mount successful attacks against him. Wives, competition at home is a real hindrance to prayer with and for your husband. When you view your husband as the competition, you view him as the enemy instead of Satan. When he is your enemy, you don't want to pray for him, you want to beat him. Of course, **Matthew 5:44** is quite clear. You are to pray even for your enemies. But wouldn't it be so much easier to pray for your husband if you viewed your union as a team and yourself as a partner? I know it is tough because your husbands rarely view the family as a real team. I know most of them view you and the rest of your family as his support system for his own individual pursuits. But instead of trying to knock him down a notch or two by competing with him. How about beginning the partnering process by praying with him and for him?
- C. If you want to be praying warriors in your home, you must first follow the advice of Peter in **I Peter 3:3-4**. You are going to have to adorn yourselves with a gentle, meek spirit which is precious in the sight of God. This does not mean you have to change your personality. It does mean you have to remember that you are a partner with your husband not a competitor. To truly accomplish that you are going to have to value what God values. You are going to have to think what God thinks. You are going to have to want what God wants. You are going to have let your life and your family be God's instruments to work in this world. This is the crux of successful prayer. Prayer only works when we line up with God in our values, thoughts, desires, words and actions. Only when we line up with God can our prayers come in line with Him and impact Him. Because only then will our prayers really be what they ought to be.
- D. Regrettably, I must address the wives who deal with husbands who will not be prayer leaders. Too many men, even Christian men, get caught up in material pursuits and let spirituality slip in their families. Wives, remember **I Peter 3:1-2**. You must continue to conduct yourself in discreet submission. Allow me to give you some prayer advice. Pray for your husbands. Pray for yourself that you might be the wife you ought to be. Pray for your husband in front of your children and teach them to pray for him. Thank God for your husband and the aspects of his life that are praiseworthy; and do so in front of your children. Teach your children to honor their father,

simply because he is the father. But always teach them to honor and serve God above their father. Pray that your children follow their heavenly Father; pray this in front of them. Furthermore, never belittle your husband because he is not what he is supposed to be. Simply pray for him and help him become what he ought to be. Whatever you do, do not teach your children to berate or belittle their father for his lack of spirituality. They may need to pray for their father to overcome weaknesses and sins, but they must always honor him as their father.

III. Children: Obeying Prayers.

- A. Children, **Ephesians 6:1-2** explains your role in the home, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise; ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’” Your role is obedience in your home. This ought to be the number one principle guiding your prayers, that you may fulfill your role at home, obeying and honoring your mother and father.
- B. You must understand that prayer is not just for adults. You must not wait until you have graduated, moved out and started “your own life” to really pray. One of the most regrettable things we do with children today is segregate them off based on their age. How many times, parents, do we have people over to our house to sing, study or pray and send our children (even the ones who have already become Christians) off to play. Children, respectfully let your parents know that you need to worship God with them. Listen to how your parents pray. Ask them to teach you to pray. If your parents do not pray, find someone who does.
- C. Above all pray for your parents. Whether you like to hear this or not, raising you is not easy. Your parents believe it is the toughest thing they have to do. They live in constant fear that they are doing it incorrectly. Pray for them to have wisdom to raise you properly. Further, you should thank God profusely for your parents, even with all their faults. They feed you, they clothe you, they send you to school, they bring you to worship. They deserve your prayers.
- D. In **Proverbs 3:1-12**, Solomon spoke to his son about worshipping and honoring God. He talked about learning God’s word. He talked about giving of your means to God’s work. He talked about submitting to the discipline of the Lord. In **vss. 5-8**, his words have special application to your prayer lives. Perhaps you have already learned that the world is fickle. You cannot trust it. Too often you cannot trust your friends. Too often you cannot even trust your family. But you must always trust God. In the end, God is always there for you and will bring you through whatever you face. Therefore you must pray to Him, trusting Him. Further, you must acknowledge Him in all your ways. You get to eat because of God. You breathe because of God. Your successes are all because of God’s grace. You need to thank Him and acknowledge His grace in your life. You must never be wise in your own eyes believing you have somehow provided any of what you have. This is particularly pertinent for young adults. How easy it is to believe we have figured out all the answers. Our parents are blind and foolish. Our elders are behind the times. But we have figured life out. Do not fall into this trap, which our society is so willing to let us believe. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Simply follow the Lord, fearing Him, trusting Him, praying to Him. This will be health and strength to you. Children, do not wait to pray. Start now.

Conclusion:

We come full circle to **Psalms 127:1**, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” To the family who does not pray, that psalm is pretty frightening. But to the plugged-in family, that psalm is great comfort. When your family is a praying family, everything you do is worthwhile, nothing is vain. When you invite the Lord to build your home through prayer, He can and will do exceedingly, abundantly above all you ask and think through your family (**Ephesians 3:20**). Therefore we conclude with our question again, “Is your family praying?”