

A Prayer Cup

Helping children develop a HABIT of DAILY prayer.



My two favorite quotes about children and prayer are from Corrie Ten Boom and Doctor Charles Stanley. In her quote Corrie describes her families experience with prayer: “*Jesus was a member of the Ten Boom family. It was just as easy to talk to him as with my mother or father, aunts or brothers and sisters. He was just there.*” Doctor Charles Stanley puts the issue even more personally: “The ONE thing that has molded my life is learning to LISTEN to God at an early age”. It is our prayer that this article helps your children take their first step toward sticking with their prayers until they get a LIFELONG connection with God.

Pick up a Styrofoam cup for each child in the family and one for each adult. On one side of each cup write “From Me to Jesus”. On the other write “From Jesus to me”. The point is: every prayer has two halves...first we talk to God then we listen. *As Dr. Stanley says no prayer is finished until a child experiences God’s comfort either in the world around him or ... in his heart.* For one week take turns praying one sentence prayers with each child. Explain that prayer is not guaranteed to move God’s hand. His hands belong to him but he has given us his heart and every prayer we pray reaches his heart. Prayer is a great way to get to know God personally.

After choosing a prayer each child gets their own cup. Explain that after the Amen our job is to listen...to keep praying and TRUSTING that God will answer...that we should not give up believing until we hear from God...his invisible spirit speaking to ours. Line up the cups near where you eat breakfast and each day for a week invite each child to read their prayer out loud. Praying the prayer last thing at night is also a good idea. After a week if the child does not think he has heard from God then he should ask others to pray with him. (Matthew 18:20). It could be a family member, someone in his Sunday School Class, even a pastor. If necessary ask the entire church to pray with the child until he believes he has heard from God...*BUT... No child should reach the age of 18 without at least one prayer answered.*

The central goal of helping children develop a HABIT of prayer is to help the child form a personal relationship with God... to CONNECT to Him. Part of that connection will be including scripture in prayer... we can’t pray rightly without scripture and we can’t understand scripture without prayer. After a child has had at least one prayer answered and is comfortable with a prayer cup try putting a Bible verse in the cup and asking God to help move it from the paper into your heart. *Learning to pray (connect with God) will take a lifetime but a prayer cup in the home will REMIND him/her every day of their lives that God is real. For prayer to become a habit in a child’s life reminders are the family’s number one need. Needs 2,3 and 4 are practice, Practice and MORE PRACTICE.* A prayer cup at the breakfast table should be as much a part of childhood as riding a bicycle or learning to read, something the child will remember all his or her life ...something that helps him CONNECT to God... something he SEES every day. Four great examples from scripture are Joseph, Moses, Daniel and Samuel. The ALL felt abandoned and faced SERIOUS problems but **THEY PRAYED...**and god was with them. Each of them became strong men, LEADERS of their nation...FRIENDS of GOD.

Charles White is a retired inner city pre-school teacher and web editor of www.teachustoprayer.com.