

## THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN CHILD TRAINING



What would you do with a heavy burden? Would you be sorrowful or grumble or let it crush you or throw it off altogether, perhaps? But now, suppose the burden is a sack containing the most exquisite nuggets of fine gold, rare gems of purest diamond and a rich mix of other precious stones, what would you do with *that heavy burden*? Now your answer narrows down. You would certainly not be too eager to rid \_\_\_\_\_ yourself of it, would you?

You would not stand around the streets with it either, lest you lose your treasure. You would immediately draw up schemes for safe keeping in a bank, a private vault . . . isn't that so? Well then, that is precisely what your child is, a treasure and sometimes what gives you a burden. Take your child by prayer to the Lord for safe keeping.

Training the child through prayer implies that we covet partnership with God in parenting. God is the omniscient Father who gave them to us and who can guide us to train aright in the way He wants. Indeed, raising good, responsible children is a heavy responsibility. Responsible mothers the world over are agreed upon that fact. A true mother is a woman that has willingly chosen to bear the initial nine-month pregnancy responsibility, and then the additional responsibilities defined in many years of nurturing, protecting, training and sculpturing the character and personality of the child. That is a hard-work! The gift and potentials God has packed into the child are more prized than gold, diamond or any other known rare gem – if only you could see it! Such a gem should not be carelessly handled lest he or she be stolen from you by the basal ideals of an evil world waiting in the wings. He/she should be brought to the Lord in fervent prayer for safe keeping. And, really, there are several issues that demand daily fervent prayer in the life of your child.

*“Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease. Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of **the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street**” (Lamentations 2:18,19). **The challenge is clear. Too many forces are contending your child with you – the peer group, the night clubs, the drug cartels, the cults, in short, the world with its glitz and fads. If these are allowed to captivate your***

*child's attention, he loses his or her innocence and you lose him or her to Satan, to the world and eventually to hell. That must not happen. You must fight it out in prayer before God. The Lord has promised to side you in the fight. ". . . Thus, saith the LORD, . . . I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children" (Isaiah 49:25). You may be physically separated from him by hundreds of kilometers at the moment, but your prayer can span all that distance and still reach him, unless of course you choose to worry rather than pray. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7). The testimony of a boy was told, who was already being corrupted through the influence of a bad friend. Not until the boy's parent began praying for both boys that the Lord turned the situation around for good. How? The Lord brought about a separation by a distance of about 1000 miles, when the friend gained admission into a school out of town. As God would even have it, both friends later surrendered their lives to the Lord in their different far apart schools.*

No little detail of his life is too trivial or too early for you to bring before God. His conversion and spiritual steadfastness, ambitions and associates, his character and career choice, his future and family life, all are necessary subjects for your prayer. You can literally shape your child's life and destiny in the prayer closet. Have you heard of the **prayer of committal** before; your personal, active prayer of faith by which you hand over your child's entire life to the Lord in a trustee arrangement? Thereafter you cease to worry but keep on trusting God through whatever storms, that He is able to keep that which has been committed into His hands. You say like Paul, *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."*

Your prayer ministry towards your child goes with the various stages of his life, it must be tailored towards the varying degrees and species of challenges he faces as he marches through life. So then, how do you pray? First **commence early**. Begin right from the womb. Lay your hand on the unborn baby and pray the promises of God concerning his/her birth, childhood, youth, and adulthood. When the birth pangs begin you can even obtain grace to turn the attendant travail to prayer groans for the child. Secondly, **continue earnestly**. Many mothers lose their child to Satan in the gap between birth and teenage age. They cease praying for the child because he/she is still innocent concerning evil, or so they think. By the time they wake up to the realization of Satan's in-roads into their "little

angel's" life, the enemy would have gone far. So, pray for your child from birth through infancy to teenage and beyond. Establish eye contact with your infant; then recite the word of God and pray for him/her. Nursing times can serve your purpose well. Thirdly, **combine effectively**. Once your child is able to express himself in words or even babbles you are ready to introduce him into your prayer life. Raise simple prayer requests that the child can understand and appreciate. Make it short but interesting. Explore innovative prayer methods such as conversational prayer, that is, you pray while he listens and responds with Amen; then he prays, and you respond likewise. Listening to your simple but earnest and sincere prayer helps him or her know how to talk to God. Jesus said, "***If two of you shall agree. . .***" The two can be you and your little boy, your teenage girl or even your married child. Fourth, **communicate electronically**. In later years when your child has left home and now lives very far away, you can still pray together electronically. If you feel a burden of prayer for your child or anyone else, modern technology makes it possible for you to pray with him on phone. You can actually hold a 15 or 30-minute prayer meeting on the phone at a time agreed with your child. The blessings that would follow would more than repay the fund expended.

Prayer works! Worry kills! The songwriter, Joseph Scriven, was right on target when he wrote of the *peace we often forfeit and the needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer*. Bringing your children to God in prayers leaves you lighter, happier, more relieved and confident of divine intervention in your child's affairs. Believe me, the feeling is good, and refreshing too Luke 18:1; Psalm 61:1-4.

We should also share testimonies of God's marvelous doings with them and ask them to also share their testimonies of answered prayers with us Psalm 66:16-20 .

If we must be effective in prayer for our children, we must be constant. It must not be a once-in-a while venture. The Scriptures say we should "***Pray without ceasing***" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Saying that we are very busy as wives and mothers will be excuses that are not tenable. It was Spurgeon who said, "*If I could not have minutes that I might spend in prayer by myself, I should pray all the same. Minute by minute, moment by moment, somehow or other, my heart must commune with my God. Prayer has become as essential to me as the bearing of my lungs and the beating of my pulse.*" Nothing should hinder us from always praying for our children. Prayer can be woven around every activity and business of the day. And perhaps, if your schedule makes no room for times of prayer, you may need to re-consider your activities or, better still, set your priorities right. An old Methodist minister once said, "*If you have so much business to attend to that you have no time to pray, depend upon it (just*

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*understand) you have more business on hand than God ever intended you should have.”* Faith is the missing ingredient in many mothers’ prayers. Often they pray in doubt and worry. They pray but confess negatively, often speaking into existence the problems that never really existed. **“Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you”** (*Numbers 14:28*). Unfortunately, too, these negative confessions are poured directly into the children’s ears. Doubt-provoking and discouraging signs are often seen while we await the outcome of our prayers. Often we seem to experience the exact opposite of what we prayed for just before the expected answers would come. This is a test of faith; but many mothers fail such tests. Most of them even start looking for wrong alternative solutions at such moments. But, right at the corner are usually the answers to our prayers. And if we wait a little more in faith and positive scriptural confessions, no matter how far we are stretched, our miracle is sure to come.

*(Culled from Christian Women Mirror June 2006)*