



Teams

a Christian movement
for married couples

Helping couples to deepen their
faith and grow closer together

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Prayer In Teams



Equipes Notre-Dame
Teams

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I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day:
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn't have time to pray.
Problems just tumbled about me,
And heavier came each task.
"Why doesn't God help me" I wondered.
He answered "you didn't ask."
I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on grey and bleak.
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said "but you didn't seek."
I tried to come into God's presence;
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided,
"My child you didn't knock."
I woke up early this morning,
And paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to take time to pray.

Author unknown

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This can be compensated at weekends when the family may have more time together but there can then be a temptation to make prayer too long, so it is a matter of striking a happy balance between the two.

There is a saying that the family who prays together, stays together. That may or may not be true. However, a happy and relaxed prayer life will give children an experience of their faith which will colour their whole outlook on religion and be with them for the rest of their lives.

In Conclusion

We can do no better than to end this leaflet on prayer with the words of Fr. Caffarel. He said:-

"God is waiting for you."

"I wish, dear friends, that when you are about to pray, you should be strongly convinced that God is waiting for you. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are waiting for you. The Lord is always waiting for us, hardly have we made a few steps towards Him than he comes to meet us.

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energy to offer is one's presence in prayer.

To start the habit of praying together it is useful to have an agreed formula. Many Teams couples find helpful reciting together the Prayer of the Church, (the Divine Office) which can be accessed in a small book, A Shorter Morning and Evening Prayer, or daily from sites on the internet. The prayer of the church, in its most enriched and developed form, is associated with the prayer of those in monastic orders, but it is also the prayer of all clerics, and in the early Church it was the prayer of all the faithful. In using this prayer we are not only joining the prayer of the religious but reviving the prayerful role of the laity in the Church.

When we pray together we are forming a praying community. What better centre and foundation for our marriage and our family?

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them."

Praying As A Family

There can be no greater joy and growth within the family unit than when they come together in prayer. For the family is not only then in union with the church, it becomes a church in itself.

Each family will find its own style of family prayer adapted to the age of the children and which must, of necessity, change as the family changes. What was a wonderful format one year might be totally inappropriate the next year.

It is much easier to introduce the idea of family prayer when the children are very young, where it then becomes an integral part of family life. Even so, as the children grow up they might decide not to take part in family prayer. This is simply part of growing up and it would be damaging to try to resist it.

Finding A Suitable Time

It may be that prayer during weekdays is a very brief affair because of the demands of homework, outside activities and working hours; nonetheless, however brief, it is important that the family comes together in prayer.

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Introduction

"Lord teach us to pray."

Prayer is at the very core of our faith and the heart of Teams. It is this communication, this ever growing relationship with God that we are constantly trying to develop in our pilgrimage of prayer.

All our lives we are building up relationships, with husband and wife, our families and our friends. We give them a proper place in our lives; we give them time where we talk and listen.

But do we give the same courtesy to God?

Some will say they pray often during the day, when driving, waiting for a bus or shopping, and, these little "chats" which punctuate our day are fine. It's like passing the time of day with an acquaintance. But we can easily turn that acquaintance into a friend by spending a little more time with them.

However, making time in our already busy lives is difficult. Sometimes it feels as if every waking moment is filled to capacity and we don't have any more time to give.

Fr Caffarel once said:- "It is difficult, I know, for you to make time for prayer in your very busy lives. And, what is more, your minds which are even more cluttered than your days, find it very difficult to free themselves for prayer."

It is often during these very busy periods of our lives that we really do need to be setting aside some time to spend in conversation with God; personally, as a couple and as a family.

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Personal Prayer

We should be looking at personal prayer as communication in an ongoing relationship, of speaking and listening in truth and trust. To do this we need to free ourselves of all that is happening around us... and that is not easy to do.

What is the best time for our dialogue with God... ?

Try to set aside a definite time for prayer. This might seem difficult at first, but once the habit is formed it becomes like second nature.

When Is The Right Time?

Perhaps it's getting up in the morning just that little bit earlier than usual and beginning your day with prayer; the whole day will benefit from it, you will work better and your relationships with others will gain from it.

For some, it could be when going to bed and thinking about the events that have shaped your life that day. Things you have done, things you have not done, words spoken and those unspoken.

Variety

We don't always have to keep to the same routine; change brings a freshness to everything. There is a place for formal prayer as well as informal prayer, for Gospel readings and reflections on the day's events. There are many books on prayer which can help you to explore different ways of praying.

Prayer sites on the internet can also be very helpful, leading one through meditative prayer. Both Sacred Space at www.sacredspace.ie and Pray as You Go at www.pray-as-you-go.org are recommended.

Silence

Talk to God about your problems and needs, but remember that it is a two way conversation, and there should always be a period for some quiet time where God has the opportunity to talk to you. It is often during this quiet time that we find the strength to cope with the difficulties of life.

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Contemplation

This 'silent prayer' is a time spent thinking of Jesus in a story from the Gospel or in an event of the day and reflecting on its place in our lives, on what Christ might be trying to say to us through it. And then we let the silence surround us so that the spirit can be heard. How long you can spend in prayer has to be decided by your circumstances, but as a member of Teams you should be aware that Father Caffarel encouraged everyone in the movement to try and spend at least ten minutes each day in silent prayer.

Praying As A Couple

At the very heart of Teams is the desire of a husband and wife to help each other to grow closer to God, and what better way to achieve this than praying together as a couple.

When a couple come together to pray, Christ is present with them. He takes them as they are with all their qualities and their limitations and gives them the grace to grow in love of each other and of Him.

We know that it is not always easy for some people to pray together. Many find it difficult and some almost impossible, even though it is an ideal, to which they genuinely aspire. For most people prayer has always been 'private' - just God and me. There may also be a difficulty in determining what 'couple prayer' should be. It can be quite uncomfortable to reveal our innermost feelings even to those we love most and it is natural to be self-conscious about exposing our deepest thoughts. However if one can overcome the difficulties, which in a busy family life include finding time when both spouses can pray together, the rewards are great.

One of the most immediate rewards is that if two people are both trying to make this endeavour there is an extra incentive to make time to pray, simply so as not to let the other spouse down. Just a reminder from another can be the necessary spur to make the time available.

In all relationships hurts are bound to occur, yet scientific research has shown that praying together increases willingness to forgive transgressions by one's partner. The habit of praying together can also be especially helpful in times of illness and stress, when sometimes all the comfort one has the