

Meeting God in Our Home

Can we really encounter God in our homes?

God wants to meet us where we are, though we often only expect or even look for that encounter with Him at Sunday Mass or maybe on a retreat. It can be difficult to take those encounters and apply them to our lives at home in our marriages and families. It is easy to overlook the fact that we have daily opportunities to encounter Him in a *very real* way in the midst of our messiness and humanness at home. There are three ways in particular to take advantage of God's presence, and though they are certainly not new, most of us struggle with them: individual prayer, married couples' prayer, and family prayer.

Individual Prayer

We all know we need to pray, and we may have great ideas about how this could benefit us. If we are honest, it is often not how we envision it leading us to give up or subconsciously choose to avoid it.

Why is it so difficult?

- We want to find the "perfect time," but somehow that never comes! If we wait for a time each day when nothing is going on or we are not busy, we will never pray.
- If we are honest with ourselves, we usually do not want to pray—we are not really sure how to do it, though we feel like we should. On top of that, we spend lots of time and energy on something that, in our memory, without great results!



How can I get better?

- Be deliberate: Make prayer part of your daily routine. Set a time each day when you *will* pray for at least 15 minutes. Even if you miss that appointed time, decide that you will not go to bed without praying!
- Keep it simple: Do not get bogged down with structures or methods of prayer.

Remember, God just wants to hear from us, and He already understands us.

Couple Prayer

We desire intimacy with our spouse, and we often feel the desire to be on the same page spiritually, but praying with another person, one-on-one, can be difficult and awkward, even if it is the person we love the most. Why is that? The answer lies in the fact that entering into prayer together, before God, is the single most intimate thing a married couple can do!

Why is it so difficult?

- We are not used to praying with another person. Getting started is difficult because, more than anything, we may not know what to do, and even if we try to fake it, our spouses usually know better!
- Once we finally do consider getting started, we can be surprised that by praying together as spouses we experience the *most* intimate thing to do together, and we are uncomfortable with the new level of vulnerability.

“How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith!” – Pope Francis

How can we get better?

- Start simple: There is no perfect “method” or structure of prayer. Just pray! Take turns thanking God for gifts in your lives, pray for the desires of your hearts, reflect on Scripture together and share your insights.
- Recommit to one another each day: The most important thing is that you pray together. Be faithful to the commitment and God will do the rest!

Family Prayer

We have all heard the saying “the family that prays together, stays together.” This is generally found to be true, but it can be much easier said than done.

Why is it so difficult?

- Spiritual leader or disciplinarian? With younger children, we may end up trying to keep them still the whole time making it feel pointless. With older kids, it may feel like a fight to keep them engaged.
- Schedules make finding time a challenge. There is homework, sports, band, ballet, not to mention dinner and bath time. Families today are rarely all in the same place at the same time.

How can we get better?

- Be perfectly imperfect: Little ones will bounce around. Try including them by giving them a role. Let them “lead” whatever part they know best, or ask them what they’re thankful for or who they want God to bless, etc.
- Be open: Ask everyone in the family, especially older children, to offer some thought on a

Scripture passage, or just to offer any spontaneous prayer they desire.

- Church as Guide: Keep family prayer time moving with the life of the Church. Include ritual prayers or songs, but try to gear it towards the appropriate liturgical season. Advent and Lent are great times to get started!



Looking for more inspiration?

The Church in the Home is a weekly radio program heard in New Orleans and Baton Rouge on Catholic Community Radio (690am New Orleans, 1380am Baton Rouge).

David Dawson, Chris O'Neill, and Timmy McCaffery of the Archdiocese of New Orleans Family Life Apostolate discuss the often exasperating yet exhilarating experience of marriage and family and the effort to take advantage of God's gifts and presence within the home. Great guests, intense topics, and hilarious stories make *The Church in the Home* something to look forward to every week.

Listen live Thursdays at 3:30 pm on WQNO AM 690 in New Orleans and access the archived shows at <http://churchinthehome.podbean.com/>.

