

Household Faith at Home for everyone

At the moment families/couples/flatmates are spending more time than ever at home as certain activities are postponed. Now more than ever we need to be pressing into God, His Word and caring for each other. Faith 5 is a great way for us all to pastorally care for one another in our homes. In fact this was God's design in the beginning for how faith was to be passed on in households. Read Deuteronomy 6:5-9

Faith 5 will look different for each household...

- The Faith 5 structure can be used by households of any size and with people of any age.
- If you have a very small baby, you may begin with just the nightly blessing prayed over them before they sleep, before continuing the rest of Faith 5 as a couple.
 - **Finding the right time of day**
 - In the daily life of households, often the best time for Faith 5 is bedtime. Studies show that a bedtime routine helps people get to sleep more easily. At bedtime the household can reflect on the events of the day. They bring into the open and deal with issues or anxieties that might cause sleeplessness if not discussed. Parents commit their child to God's care through the night and children go to sleep secure in the love of God and of their parents.
 - Some families have found other times of day work for them: first thing in the morning or around the dinner table.
 - Skype and other electronic communication allow grandparents/aunties/uncles to have Faith 5 sessions with grandchildren, reducing a sense of isolation for them. It can also allow a family member who is not physically in the house to participate at Faith 5 time.

Step 1 - Share Highs and Lows

Take turns sharing the highs and lows of your day. Highs are the good things that happen; lows are the bad things.

The practice of identifying high and low moments and events:

- teaches the skills of reflection and evaluation
- can 'halve the pain and double the joy'
- builds trust and strengthens relationships.

Sometimes the high and the low are the same thing. Bad things and good things may be things that you do, or things that happen to you. As children become more aware of the impact of their behaviour on others, this sharing may lead to confession and forgiving one another.

Everyone in the household should have a chance to share, rather than one person monopolising the conversation. Youngest children may need some prompting about what has happened during the day. Accept each person's story as a true report and a gift to the rest of you. You can respond with caring comments to one another's stories.

Step 2 - Read the Bible

God speaks to us through the Bible. When you read from the Bible as part of Faith 5, you are inviting God into your household's conversation.

For young children you could use: a Bible story, a Bible song, a single Bible phrase.

For older children as they learn to read: they may read the verse from their own Bible and highlight it, take turns reading and/or selecting Bible readings, you may read the passage twice for clarity and understanding.

For Faith 5 it's better to dig deeply into a single Bible verse or thought than to study large blocks of Bible text. The Bible component of Faith 5 can be from any Bible reading scheme.

In times of uncertainty it is great to read verses from Psalms. Psalm 4:8, 10:14, 16:5,6, 27:14, 30:11,12, 34:4, 18, 145:14,18 and many more!

Step 3 - Relate the Bible reading to your day

The key question after reading from God's word is 'What does this mean for us?' Adults can reflect on 'what it means for me' and sometimes 'what I think it means for our family', but be cautious about telling a child 'what it should mean for you'.

The ability to relate ideas from one situation (the Bible) to another situation (daily life) requires maturity and practice.

Young children will not make the same connections that adults make. That's OK. Give your children the opportunity to find for themselves in the Bible passage the Good News about God's love and/or the caution or guidance for living that God provides.

This step involves active listening. People need to concentrate on what they hear one another saying as well as what they hear God saying. It also teaches the skill of reflection as they find intersections between what God says and the stories of their own lives.

Step 4 - Pray

Discussing the highs and lows of your day, and hearing what God has said to you, prepares your hearts and minds to talk to God about these things. You speak directly to God, and place in God's hands all the concerns you have discussed.

- Thank God for your highs, for his love and for his guidance.
- Ask God for continued guidance, help, strength, patience and courage in the face of the lows.
- Children can pray as they are able to put their thoughts into words.

Different ways you could pray:

Go around a household circle and each person pray for the person to their left.

Name a person and let each person say something to pray for them.

Let each person pray for themselves.

If you are unsure what to pray, you may simply say 'Lord Jesus, we pray for (name)'.

Sing a Gospel song inserting the person's name, for example: 'Jesus loves Kelly; this I know; for the Bible tells me so'.

Leader says 'Thank you, God, for . . .' and each person adds something from their own highs. Leader says, 'Please help us . . .' and each person adds something from their own low.

Say God's family prayer (the Lord's Prayer). Pause after each line to think of the highs and lows you have discussed (see example).

Jesus' Household Prayer

Our Father in heaven: hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

(What good things have helped you know God is in charge of your life and the world?)

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

(Where do you need help to understand what God wants for you and the world?)

Give us today our daily bread.

(What good things has God given you? What are the practical things you need?)

Forgive us our sins

(What do you need to confess and ask God's forgiveness about?)

as we forgive those who sin against us.

(Who has hurt you and needs you to forgive them?)

Save us from the time of trial

(What trials and temptations are you facing that you need God to help you handle?)

and deliver us from evil.

(What bad things do you need God to help you through?)

For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

This prayer is found in the Bible in Matthew 5:9-13. Your household may use a slightly different version of this prayer.

Step 5 - Bless

- To bless someone is to link the person with God's good promises.
- A blessing and assurance of love includes a physical touch: hand on head, hug, kiss, or making the sign of the cross.

You can use your own words, words from Bible blessings or simply: 'Jesus loves you, and so do I' or 'Sleep, my child, for God is with you, all through the night'.

Here are some blessings from the Bible

Numbers 6:24–26 Psalm 121:7,8 Romans 15:13 Philippians 4:7 Philippians 4:19,20
1 Thessalonians 5:28 1 Peter 1:2b