
Raising children in the fear and admonition of the LORD

Raising children is one of the biggest and most important responsibilities which God gives to us. Having children may also help us to understand God a little more, as he is our Heavenly Father, and we are His children. The record of God dealing with his children Israel in the Old Testament shows us God's faithful love. As parents ourselves, the lessons are relevant – we need to provide, love and nurture our children as well as teach, rebuke and chastise. We need to be forbearing and gracious. Raising our children in the fear of the LORD, and training them in the paths of righteousness is not something that comes naturally to many of us. It has been a blessing for us to see different families raising their children in the fear and admonition of the LORD. Different families do different things in different ways. Some of the methods we have seen are given below.

Different families – different things

1. Develop a family routine which includes reading the Bible every day. For some families, this may be in the morning. For others it may be in the evening. When our children were small we would do the readings between dinner and dessert :) Now that they are older we can do the readings after dinner! Keep the routine, no matter who is present, or how many are present. Include the youngest members of the family. When children are young, and cannot read, they can repeat the words of a verse which you read (one word or one phrase at a time). When the children are older, and have friends visit, doing the family bible readings after the meal becomes an avenue where people may be introduced to the word of God. For brothers and sisters who may be present at the time, it is a time of fellowship.
2. Ask the children to take turns to pray at mealtimes sometimes. This helps them to learn to articulate prayers in front of others.
3. Openly acknowledge and thank God, and tell how he is working in your life, so that the children hear of it.

Peer support

4. Take your children to youth group to develop their friendships with other young people who also come from families who fear God.
5. Prioritise attending one Bible camp or conference each year. This builds up the friendship network of brothers and sisters. It was also a commandment for the children of Israel to attend the feasts to remember God and has many benefits.
6. Develop an appreciation for the beauty of God's creation in your children.

Bible verses

7. Teach your children (and yourself) to learn Bible verses off by heart which are appropriate for each child's age. One example: "We have food and clothing – we will be content with that." (1 Tim 6:8). Say the verse at a landmark which you pass every day, for example a set of traffic lights which you stop at each day when dropping the children off to school.
 8. Explicitly teach your children the importance of obedience, and the importance of not complaining or arguing (Phil 2:14).
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9. Pray to God to bless and guide your marriage. Pray that you will be filled with his wisdom and love. Pray for your children.

Other advice and **examples** we have seen, and think worthwhile sharing are:

10. Develop a family routine which includes a family meal with all members present.

11. Try to have one family holiday each year, where bonds of family can be strengthened away from influences of the world, internet, phones, friends. As children become young adults, this becomes less feasible.

Our Father ...

Just as God is our protector and comforter, we need to be the same for our children. Just as God delights in us and loves us, so we need to do the same for our children. God provides his commandments to us which give us peace, and we need to teach these to our children.

(Names withheld on request)
