

Praying for our Families

by Pastor Robert M. Reid

E. M. Bounds wrote, “God shapes the world by prayer.”

How such a concept rankles the hearts of 21st century evangelical Christians who have drifted into the notion that God needs activists more than He needs intercessors. Pollster George Barna discovered that 20% of North American Evangelical Christians do not pray at all during a given week. I wonder how much time is invested by the other 80% who claim that they have prayed at least once during the week. If it is true that “God shapes the world by prayer,” then is the shape our world is in any great surprise?

Why is prayer so hard for many of us? Perhaps Chris Tiegreen captured the reason when he wrote,

Waiting quietly is not what most of us do best. We prefer to be activists, at least in the matters that pertain to us. Perhaps we like to maintain an illusion of control. Perhaps we just don't trust other people (or God for that matter) as much as we trust ourselves. Regardless, it's against our nature to wait patiently when we think we might be able to affect an outcome.

So we act instead of praying and “waiting quietly” for God to intervene. We barge into situations with mouths blazing and emotions unleashed against the enemies of our souls, of our families, of our churches, and our communities. An eerie tune floods my mind with its accompanying words, “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.”

May and June highlight three special events in our nation: the National Day of Prayer (May 4), Mother's Day (May 14), and Father's Day (June 18). Perhaps this year it would be good to merge these three events together. Our nation needs to pray that moms and dads would have wisdom as they lead their children. We need to pray that parents would learn the importance and power of a godly example consistently lived out before their children. Pray that parents would have solid marriages, where children see love that mirrors Christ's love for the Church and depicts the Church's submission to Christ.

On the National Day of Prayer, may dads pray for their children's growth in godliness. May the faults dads see in their children be brought to the “throne of grace.” Then upon leaving that throne, may dads dispense grace to their children, modeling the grace of God. May dads pray for



wisdom as they provide leadership in the home. Pray that they then spend the time in that home to lead by practical example rather than by just issuing edicts by cell phone or e-mail. Pray that dads will have the courage to discipline their children in such a way that the children are not exasperated. May affirmation be blended with necessary correction.

On the National Day of Prayer may mothers pray for a positive impact upon their children. May their children see a mother who is a supporter rather than a critic. Pray for mothers as they are forced to balance so many roles and engage in so many activities associated with their calling. Pray for young mothers as they influence their preschoolers. Pray too for those mothers whose families have chosen to engage in home schooling. Pray that children would rise up and bless and honor their parents.

Pray that our nation's laws will support the marriage of a man and a woman so that children have the benefit of both mother and father. Pray that husbands and wives will see marriage as a sacred, lifelong commitment so that children are raised in an environment of harmony, not antagonism. Pray that our nation will not be a nation of absentee fathers and abandoned mothers. Seek the Lord, that our nation may see the sacredness of each life and cause babies in their mothers' wombs to be protected.

Praying about our families, our mothers, and our fathers, says a lot about us and our beliefs about God. It says, “We believe God is interested in our families. We trust that God can intervene in the concerns that we have about our families. We acknowledge that God has a plan and purpose for our families.” Let's pray and quietly wait upon the Lord for Him to work mightily in our families and those of our nation. May God shape our families as we pray.