

“Family Devotions Made Simple”

My son, Jeff, and I are going through the **One-Year Bible** together. We started last April, so we only have about three months left and we will have been through the entire Bible. It has been a great way for him to learn how to have a daily quiet time. We read the daily entries on our own and then most days discuss them at either breakfast, supper, or both. Usually we will read part of it as our family devotions. Of all the ways we have done family devotions and of all the ways I have sought to disciple my children, this has proven to be one of my favorite. I would highly recommend it as a way men (or single moms) can lead their families in devotions.

As we discuss the passages, I help us see how they fit into the whole of the particular book or letter we are reading and also how they fit into the whole message of the Bible. I also highlight what connection they have to the gospel and something about how we should apply them.

Men, give this a try in your own home. Here are the simple steps:

1. Print off the **One-Year Bible** reading list from the resource page of our Church web site: www.mindenefc.org. Put it in your Bible and you are ready to start.
2. Plan a time when you will say a few words about the daily readings and will read part or all of one of the readings as your family devotions. This could be breakfast, supper, or before bed-time. The important thing is that you choose a time which will usually work for your family so you can be regular. Remember, dads, the most important thing is that you “step up to the plate”. You don’t have to be a pastor, a great teacher, and you don’t have to turn cartwheels to do this. As Nike reminds us, “just do it”—and be faithful. If all your children are pre-school age and/or younger, then do this with your wife that you might encourage her in her walk with Christ (see Ephesians 5:25-33).
3. For most men it will be helpful to have a good study Bible which will aid you with your comments. I would suggest either the **Reformation Study Bible** or the **ESV Study Bible**.
4. To have devotions with your pre-school, toddler, and early elementary school children, use **The One Year Bible For Children**, by Gilbert Beers. This will take children through the Bible in one year. The Bible readings are summaries, but do contain actual biblical text and are not just Bible stories. Once your children begin reading, you can have them begin their own quiet time out of **The One Year Bible For Children**. A good plan may be to discuss and read from the **One-Year Bible** as you begin supper (for your wife and older children). Then, at bed-time you could read from **The One Year Bible For Children** to younger children. Or, you could alternate. One night read for the younger children (perhaps having older children do some of the reading to involve them) and then the next night read for older children and adults.
5. Spend time in prayer (I keep our prayer list in a Bible right at our table) and also make it your goal to memorize at least one Bible verse or passage a week. After your reading

and discussion are done, you can learn and review verses. For help in what to memorize, see the Hammer Verses on the resource page of our church web site. We also have one verse or passage up a week on the home page and in our Sunday morning bulletin which is the Hammer Verse of the week.

There you have it, dads. Family devotions can be a fearful thing. Yet, as you can see, the hardest part is just getting started. If you bathe this in prayer and take the step of faith to get started, the Lord will show Himself faithful and help you through it. Though someday you will be sorry if you never start family devotions, I can guarantee you will never be sorry you started them. It is the path whereby your sons and daughters will come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and also become those who joyfully follow and love Him to His glory.!

Is this a nice thing to do, if you have some spare time, if you someday get around to it? But it's o.k., if you never do? No! Dads, we are commanded to train, to teach, to disciple our children. Consider:

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deut. 6:6-7)

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Prov. 22:6)

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

And it has been this way at least since the time God called Abraham. Genesis 18:19 (which was part of today's reading from the **One-Year Bible**) says that the Lord not only called Abraham to be the patriarch of Israel, but also “that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice....”

I am convinced after almost a quarter century of shepherding God's people, one of the primary reasons our children do not thrive in their walk with Christ (and in some cases walk about from the faith) is because Dads are not fulfilling this all-important ministry in the home.

So, men, how about it? Let's take up the mantle and fulfill our God-given calling of discipling our children and leading our families in step with the gospel and for God's glory. As important as it is that you “bring home the bacon,” it pales in comparison to your greatest purpose as a father and as a husband—that of spiritual head and leader.