

Let the Little

CHILDREN

come



The ministry of praying with children

C H R I S T I N E D I L L E R

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Preface

I wish I would have had the knowledge and courage to pray with my children more when they were young. I don't know why I found it so difficult to pray with them in a personal way. Maybe the devil wanted to keep me confused. Looking back, I can see where I could have made it so natural.

We did teach our children about prayer. We taught them to thank God for their food at mealtimes. We prayed around the table during devotions. We took them to church and Sunday school where they heard about prayer. We read them stories about answered prayers. We taught them the Lord's Prayer and some children's prayers.

Yet I feel something was missing. I wish I had prayed more with them. I wish I had talked to them more about what prayer is and about how to pray. I was too shy about my praying, and I didn't know enough about prayer myself.

Maybe you were raised with prayer as natural as breathing. That's wonderful. Pass it on to your children. If, like me, you struggle with sharing prayer with the

children in your life, I want to help you overcome that struggle.

If you are a young mother who would like to pray with her children, I've written this book for you. If you, like me, are a grandma who would like to pray with her grandchildren, I've written this book for you. If you are a teacher, aunt, babysitter, or in any other way involved with children, I've written this book for you.

All of us have children in our lives. All of us can help raise children who pray. Together, let's teach our children that they have a loving, attentive Father in Heaven who wants each of them to talk to Him about everything in their lives.

Let's raise a generation of effectual fervent pray-ers.

Introduction

I once heard someone say that the only prayer God can hear from a non-Christian is “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). Their reason for this belief was the Bible verse that says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psalm 66:18). This teaching confused me when I thought about children. Is a child who hasn’t reached the age of accountability not able to pray in an effectual way about real needs?

Now I see this more clearly. I will never be at the point where I can confidently say I am free from sin. There may be times when I’m not aware of sin in my life and God still hears my prayers. The words *regard iniquity in my heart* tell me the psalmist is talking about sin I know about but refuse to let go. Also, a young child pleases God by obeying his conscience and his parents. He isn’t answerable to God for his sin in the same way those who have come to accountability are.

Three of the Gospels tell of a time when parents brought their children to Jesus to be blessed. The disciples tried to turn them away. When Jesus saw what was happening, He was “much displeased.” He said, “Allow

the children to come to Me; do not forbid them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” and “whoever does not receive and welcome the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all” (Mark 10:14, 15 *Amplified*).

In this story, Jesus tells me I must think of God as a small child does before I can enter the kingdom of Heaven. He said the kingdom of God belongs to children.

How dare I think that children can't come to Jesus with heartfelt petitions in their childlike state? Many times they trust God more completely than we adults do; that makes their prayers very effective, because God answers prayers prayed in faith.

Let the little children come in prayer. Let's pray with them and relearn our own childlike trust in God.

Each reading in this book ends with a verse or verses about prayer for mothers and children to learn together.



Part 1

Teach Us to Pray

I've known how to say the Lord's Prayer for a long time—so long that I don't remember learning it. During my childhood, I understood little of this prayer, though I could easily quote it word for word. As I grew in my Christian life and struggles caused me to seek God more in prayer, He led me to a deeper study of this model prayer He gave His disciples.