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HOLY FAMILY
We, in family, know, dear God,
that whenever we act
from that precious place called love,
it is holy.

Help us, then,
to help those who don’t understand
that holiness is present
in the millions of
big and little ways we love one another.

That it doesn’t mean we have to go
anywhere.

That our home
is already a holy place, too.
Like other holy places.
Already holy, O God. Already holy.

And you know, and we know,
dear God,
that we don’t always have to do anything else either.

Just continue…
Remembering you…
In the way we love one another.
Amen.

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A Couple’s
Book of Prayers
Here are some tips from

**WHO ME, PRAY? ... WITH HER?**

*Down to earth questions and answers about praying as a couple*

By Jim & Susan Vogt ©2006

**OK, we might give it a try, but where do we start?**
There is no wrong way to pray and the desire to try is prayer in itself. First some preliminary decisions:

1. **Decide a time**
   Presumably both of you are very busy. Isn’t everyone these days? So finding an agreeable, semi-reliable time is essential. After experimenting with several times of day my husband and I agreed on first thing in the morning (about 15-20 min. before the first child is expected to awake.) Since Jim is a morning person and I’m not, his job is to wake me and say it’s time.

2. **Decide a place**
   Anywhere will do, but it’s nice to have a bible or whatever reading you plan to use handy. If clutter is endemic to your home at least find a place where you can cover it or turn your back on it. Personally, I like to have a window that I can look out of and see the sky. If it’s dark, lighting a candle can be inspiring.

3. **Decide how often**
   Ideally, daily is the way to go since there is a rhythm and regularity to it. In our own marriage, however, we have made peace with a less than ideal but workable goal. We commit to weekdays since that’s more predictable than the weekends. We figure Mass takes care of Sunday. We also make exceptions for illness, being out of town, pregnancy (when almost any time felt nauseous), or unexpected interruptions like crying babies. It’s not perfect, but we feel we’re doing OK if we meet our bottom line of “doing it more often than not”. God wants our attention not our guilt.

**So what do we do once we’re sitting together?**
There are many ways to pray depending on your style and preferences. Here are a few:

- Memorized prayers
- Reflection on today or tomorrow
- Reading scripture
- Guided meditation (from a book)
- Writing in a journal
- Reading an inspirational book
- Rosary or devotions
- Meditation on a spiritual theme
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Your own creation

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**ACT OF CONTRITION**

O, my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments; but most all because they offend you, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

Amen.

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**UNWRAPPING OUR FAMILY**

Bless us, O God,
for these, your gifts,
which you have given to us,
which we sometimes don’t even recognize.

The time to sleep in on Saturday
or a fistful of dandelions
or even mud on our floor
or another payday.

And bless us too, O Lord,
for the gifts of dishes to do
or groceries to buy or cars to fix
or diapers to change or jeans to wash
or a phone that rings
or (yet another) birthday to celebrate.

For in all of these,
all of these, and more,
we find the presence of you
especially in the gift
of each other.

Amen.

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PRAYER IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY
Lord, thank you for this day.
It wasn’t easy.
In fact, it’s amazing how challenging life can be sometimes,
but in spite of the challenges,
it is good to be alive.
It is good to be busy.
It is very good to know that you are there,
silently, in the background,
but always there nonetheless, watching over us,
and caring for us.
Stay close, Lord. Continue to hold us in your love,
because today is over now,
but tomorrow promises to be another challenging day.
Amen.

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE
Lord, help us. Please guide us, strengthen us, lead us, direct us,
and show us the way you want us to go.
We cannot get there on our own; the road is too rough,
but with you beside us, we can do amazing things—
things we could not possibly do on our own.
Open our hearts to know your will for us
and the courage to always follow your will for us
in a way that pleases you. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Rank the above styles from 1 to 10 and find the ways that appeal to both of you.

Hey, we’re not theologians. What do we do with the information above?
Keep it simple. After trying to be creative and experimenting with a variety of styles my husband and I found that for regular couple prayer to work for us it had to be very simple. Eventually we settled on the following format:

One Model – 5 Easy Steps
1. Jim finds the scripture reading of the day (since he’s more awake than I am).
2. One of us opens the prayer with a phrase like “Lord, we come before you at the start of our day.”
3. One of us reads the scripture out loud.
4. We sit in silence for awhile. (We may think about the scripture, the upcoming day and how we will live it out, or perhaps put some thoughts in a journal). Inevitably for me, some time is spent daydreaming. I’m not proud of this, but I would do you no favor to suggest that you fail when not fully concentrating. Sometimes I just offer up the distraction and figure I’m honoring God by the effort I made just to show up.
5. At the appointed ending time, each of us makes a petition flowing from our silent prayer.

Can you simplify “simple”?
How about after the alarm goes off (before you get out of bed) hold hands and offer a prayer for a good day, help with a particular problem, or thanksgiving. Likewise, at night, after turning off the light, hold hands and offer a prayer of thanks for anything that day.

How do we find the scripture of the day or other books?
Visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ website for healthy marriages: www.foryourmarriage.org
or the daily readings page on the USCCB’s website:
http://www.usccb.org/nab/today.shtml
Why Pray Together?

There are many good reasons for praying together. Jesus tells us that where two or three are gathered together, he is there in our midst. At the wedding ceremony, we promise to be true to one another in good times and bad, in sickness and health, for richer or poorer, until death. What better way to live up to that pledge than with the help of prayer? Most of us pray alone, but why not try praying as a couple as well?

Research has found that couples who attend church services together on a weekly basis have a 3% divorce rate. Not bad! Taking it a step further, couples who pray together regularly have a .3% divorce rate!! Pretty compelling reason to give it a try, don't you think?

Tips for Praying Together

Just do it! If you've never prayed together, you may feel uncomfortable at first. That is O.K. Your spouse or fiancée probably feels the same way. Share your feelings with each other and go on. The more you do it, the less uncomfortable you will feel.

Start out small. Begin by just praying at meal times. Some couples just say a quick prayer together at night. Try something traditional like the “Our Father.” After doing that for a while, try adding another favorite prayer or adding intentions. Do something small, but well for a couple of weeks, then add more if you want to.

Pray for each other’s intentions. Doing this either personally or together is a wonderful communication builder. It shows real love and concern, not to mention the results which prayer does yield. You can talk about these intentions at breakfast or other meal times. For instance, “Please pray for me today, I have that interview for the new job.” Write the intentions down so you can remember to pray for them. Some couples pray for these intentions either at meal time or before going to bed.

Try praying with scripture. Read a verse from a gospel or one of the psalms. Perhaps use a verse from that day’s Mass. After reading the scripture verse, share what it makes you think of or what it means to you.

There are many more ways to pray together. These are just a few ideas to get you started. The important thing is that you try something and stick with it. You and your marriage will be blessed. You have nothing to lose and so much to gain.

AN OLD FAMILY BLESSING

May your kids be healthy and good in school.
May they get fingerprints on your walls and jelly on the floor.
May your house ring with the sounds of stereos, blow dryers, lawn mowers, dogs, and best friends.
May your floors be strewn with clothing, crayons.
May your phone ring with the voices of loved ones and strangers.
May your home be blessed with readiness to sit right down and talk or play or cry or laugh with one another.
May your hearts be filled with understanding and forgiveness and a lot of time to just be.
May your little boys grow up to be loving men who share what’s in their hearts as well as what’s in their minds.
May your little girls grow up to be loving women who share their minds as well as their hearts.

May you celebrate the wonderfulness of being on God’s earth at the same time, in the same home, in the unique experience of being your holy family.

Amen.

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BLESS US WITH PEACE

Peace is a word we use often, dear God, in this day and age, as it applies to war and killing. But know that we need some plain old peace in our lives too. Sometimes our home is upside down with bedlam, sort of like a mild earthquake or hurricane.

Sometimes there’s even war between those of us who live here in this house as we hurt one another with words or deeds. And sometimes we even have war within ourselves about something we’re thinking of doing, or have done already.

And it is in these times especially that we need your help; We need your advice; We need to hear your voice, We need your peace.

Amen.

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BLESSING PRAYER FOR RENEWING A COMMITMENT BETWEEN TWO PERSONS

One: Holy Creator of love, we celebrate and renew our mutual lives that are lived as one.
We reseal, by this holy prayer, our commitment to each other to a life of shared dreams, thoughts and feelings.
We ask your holy help so that we may be always awake to the needs of each other, needs both spoken and unspoken.
May our two but twin pathways lead us to the fullness of life and to you.

Other: We ask Your divine protection from the strong tides of daily troubles that tend to pull us apart from each other.
Shield us from the social sickness of no commitment.
Show us how to rechannel the hidden streams of selfishness that always threaten to separate us.
Lord it was said by the ancients that from each of us flows a light that reaches straight to heaven;
that when two persons destined to be united come together, their two streams fuse into a single bright beam reaching to heaven and giving splendor to all the universe.
We ask that our love for each other will shine as a single flame to all.

One: We thank you for the gifts of past years as we place our hope in the ancient truth that whatever is begun here on earth will flower to fullness in heaven.
As a sign of our desire to be united, today and in the days to follow, we join now our glasses as one and share a common chalice of our covenant with each other and with You, our Lord and God.
Amen.

From Prayers for the Domestic Church (A Handbook for Worship in the Home) by Edward Hays

SIGN OF THE CROSS
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

OUR FATHER
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY
Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GLORY BE
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

APOSTLES CREED
I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.
**PRAYER IN THE MORNING**
Good morning, Lord.
Thank you for bringing us to the start of a new day.
May all of our thoughts, words, and actions today be directed toward you.
May we remember that the things we do and the people we meet present endless opportunities for reflecting your love in our world.
Hold us in your care today.
Help us in whatever ways we might need your help; strengthen us in whatever ways we might need your strength; guide us in whatever ways we might need your guidance.
And when this day is over, bring us safely back to one another and to you.
We ask all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son.
Amen.

**PRAYER IN THE EVENING**
O my God, we bow before you to thank you with our whole hearts for all the favors you have bestowed upon us this day:
for our life and our faith, our health, our food and our shelter, and for each other.
We thank you for your care and protection and for all the other gifts that we do not remember now or that we do not value as we should.
We thank you for walking with us always.
Grant us the continued grace to live in your love, now and forever. Amen.

**PRAYER BEFORE MEALS**
Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**PRAYER AFTER MEALS**
We give you thanks for all your benefits, O Lord, who lives and reigns forever and ever, world without end.
Amen.

**BLESSING FOR MARRIAGE**
Almighty and eternal God,
You have so exalted the unbreakable bond of marriage that it has become the sacramental sign of Your Son’s union with the Church as His spouse.
Look with favor on us whom You have united in marriage as we ask for your help and the protection of the Virgin Mary.
We pray that in good times and in bad we will grow in love for each other; that we will resolve to be of one heart in the bond of peace.
Lord, in our struggles, let us rejoice that You are near to help us; in our needs let us know that you are there to rescue us; in our joys let us see that you are the source and completion of every happiness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PRAYER OF SPOUSES FOR EACH OTHER**
Lord Jesus, grant that I and my spouse may have a true and understanding love for each other.
Grant that we may both be filled with faith and trust.
Give us the grace to live with each other in peace and harmony.
May we always bear with one another’s weaknesses and grow from each other’s strengths.
Help us to forgive one another’s failings and grant us patience, kindness, cheerfulness and the spirit of placing the well-being of one another ahead of self.
May the love that brought us together grow and mature with each passing year.
Bring us both ever closer to you through our love for each other. Let our love grow to perfection. Amen.

**Prayers for All Occasions**
*Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception*
**MARRIAGE PRAYER**
Lord God, we ask you to bless us.
Help us to realize that each and every day we have together
is a gift from you.
Guide us so that we may never lose sight
of the very special love that we share.
Grant that we may have a true and understanding love
for one another.
Grant that we both may be filled with faith and trust.
Give us the grace to live our marriage in peace and harmony.
May we always bear with one another’s weaknesses
and grow from each other’s strengths.
Help us to forgive one another’s failings,
and grant us patience, kindness, cheerfulness, understanding,
and selflessness in our dealings with one another.
May the love that first brought us together
grow and mature to sustain us through each passing year.
Bring us ever closer to you through our love for one another.
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

**PRAYER TO BE A GOOD SPOUSE**
Lord God, you have reminded us that in marriage
husband and wife are to be two in one flesh,
and we are continually admonished that in all things
your bond of union is your law of love.
Teach us to be lovingly and closely united with our spouse.
Teach us to share with concern and care
the problems each other may have.
Teach us to be a comfort to each other in times of trial and sorrow
and to share in each other’s joys and rewards.
May we not seek our own good until
the other’s good has been sought.
Teach us to always treat each other
with tenderness, kindness, and gentleness.
Let us not nag or complain about or to each other,
but let us often seek words of encouragement and praise
for each other.
May our love together lead us to understand your great love for us
and lead us ever closer to you.
We ask all this in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen.

(Adapted from "A Father’s Manual")

**MEMORARE**
Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to your protection,
implored your help, or sought your intercession
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
we fly to you, O virgin of virgins, our mother.
To you we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful.
O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions,
but in your mercy hear and answer us.
Amen.

**ANGELUS**
The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,
and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. …
Behold, the handmaid of the Lord,
be it done unto me according to your word.
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. …
And the Word was made flesh
and dwelt among us.
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. …
Pray for us, O holy mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
Let us pray:
Pour forth: we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts,
that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, your Son,
was made known by the message of an angel,
may by his passion and cross
be brought to the glory of his resurrection,
through the same Christ our Lord.
Amen.
THE ROSARY

The Rosary is a Scripture-based prayer and involves contemplating various events in the life of Jesus Christ. These events are split into four sets of Mysteries, each of which contain five events.

Joyful Mysteries
traditionally prayed on Monday and Saturday, and Sundays of Advent
✧ The Annunciation
✧ The Visitation
✧ The Nativity
✧ The Presentation in the Temple
✧ The Finding in the Temple

Sorrowful Mysteries
traditionally prayed on Tuesday and Friday, and Sundays of Lent
✧ The Agony in the Garden
✧ The Scourging at the Pillar
✧ The Crowning with Thorns
✧ The Carrying of the Cross
✧ The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

Glorious Mysteries
traditionally prayed on Wednesday, and Sundays outside of Lent & Advent
✧ The Resurrection of the Lord
✧ The Ascension into Heaven
✧ The Coming of the Holy Spirit
✧ The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
✧ The Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Luminous Mysteries
traditionally prayed on Thursday
✧ The Baptism of the Lord
✧ The Wedding Feast at Cana
✧ The Proclamation of the Kingdom
✧ The Transfiguration
✧ The Institution of the Eucharist

Before beginning, select one of the four sets of Mysteries on which to meditate in prayer.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross. While holding the crucifix, pray the Apostles Creed. On the first bead near the crucifix, pray an Our Father. On each of the next three beads, pray a Hail Mary (to grow in the virtues of faith, hope and love). Then pray a Glory Be.

For each of the five decades, announce one of the five mysteries for the set on which you chose to meditate. You may wish to follow it with a brief reading of related Scripture. Continue by praying an Our Father on the first bead and then a Hail Mary on each of the next ten beads as you reflect on the first mystery in that set. End meditation of that mystery with a Glory Be, followed with the prayer given by Our Blessed Mother at Fatima:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of your mercy.

Repeat for each of the five mysteries in that set.

After praying the five decades and having meditated on each of the five mysteries, The Rosary concludes as follows:

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears!

Turn, then, O most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating on these mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.