

Praying in Contemporary Christian Families: Listening to Children's Voices and Parents' Fears

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Many contemporary Christian authors speak eloquently of the necessity of family prayer and of the joys of sharing faith with children. In their appeals to parents, they are very much like John Chrysostom, Martin Luther, Horace Bushnell, and many other Christian theologians past and present who have understood parenting as a religious vocation.

Yet the practice of faith in the home is less common today due to a number of new challenges, not the least of which is the growing number of interchurch and interreligious marriages and the increasingly pluralistic settings in which children grow up questioning their family's faith and practices from a much earlier age.

What sort of practice should be embraced by Christian families when a unity of perspective on faith and practice cannot be taken for granted inside or outside the home?

This paper uses the experience of interfaith families and recent studies on faith development in children to argue for a model of family prayer that has room for the spiritual concerns of adults and children and seeks the growth of all.