Family Wellness Ministry Reflection
“Prayer Rules” – An Invitation to Sanctify Time
by Jennifer Hall

“God called the light Day; the darkness He called Night and there was evening and morning, one day.” Genesis 1:5

Paraphrased from Blueprints for the Little Church, by Elissa Bjeletich and Caleb Shoemaker:

With the creation of light and the naming of Day and Night, God created order and time; he gifted us with a rhythm of life and routine. Time was holy and the rhythm of life sanctified. What an incredible truth!

With such busy modern lives, how can we step into God’s sacred time and sanctify our rhythms of life?

Challenge your family to sanctify evenings by keeping a nightly prayer rule. Light candles, lower the lights, stand before our altar and pray aloud together. Truthfully, at first it might feel a bit awkward and forced. Before prayers are memorized we might stumble on the words. Overtime, your prayers will grow into holy friends. Soon you will look forward to the day’s end and the pause before the icon of Christ and the Theotokos.

The moments spent in prayer will become a natural part of the rhythm of life as a family. Sometimes kids will be grumbly, but try to stick to the schedule and remember the words of St. Ambrose of Optina:

“The Holy Fathers say that prayer with force is higher than prayer unforced. You do not want to, but force yourself. The Kingdom of Heaven is taken by force (cf. Matt. 11:12).”

Great Lent is a perfect time to experiment with a prayer rule in your life! If you already keep a prayer rule, perhaps Great Lent is the right time to expand it or add in another rule.

For more insight and ideas on how to create and keep a prayerful rhythm of life, the Family Wellness Ministry recommends Blueprints for the Little Church by Elissa Bjeletich and Caleb Shoemaker.

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