



## Family Wellness Ministry Reflection

### Introducing Evening Prayer *by Anna Warren*

*"It is of great significance if there is a person who truly prays in a family. Prayer attracts God's Grace and all the members of the family feel it, even those whose hearts have grown cold. Pray always." —Elder Thaddeus*

Forming an idea of the prayers you want to say as a family (your "prayer rule"), and creating a sacred space for prayer in your home are essential steps toward praying as a family, however this seemingly simple goal can be very difficult to achieve. Setting aside a special time to pray together is important. Evening can be a natural time for families to gather and say a closing prayer for the day.

Each family's prayer time can look very different. Choosing a prayer rule that is achievable for your family members will help to make it easier to be consistent in following it. If your household has people with longer attention spans, you may want to challenge yourselves to take the 5 minutes or so to say the entire Evening Prayer from your Prayer Book.

#### Helpful resources

*A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*

*Children's Orthodox Prayer Book - with instructional notes by Priest Steven Allen and drawings by Olga Yaremenko*

*Hear Me, a prayerbook for Orthodox young adults, by Annalisa Boyd*

*We Pray* (a children's book about prayer with supplements available for download) by Daniel G. Opperwall

Visit the "Prayer" section of the Holy Apostles website:  
[www.holyapostlesgo.org/prayer](http://www.holyapostlesgo.org/prayer)

On the other hand, if your family has younger members you will probably want to start smaller. Teaching your young child a simple ritual of saying the Jesus Prayer in front of an icon is a beautiful way to start. A little step further would be to say the Lord's Prayer together in your icon area, followed by personal prayers of thanks. From there you can add more small prayers as your family is ready.

When our oldest was a toddler we just let her play nearby while we did our regular evening prayers, but as our kids grew older we weren't able to pray all together. Eventually we settled on what has turned out to be the best mixture for our family at this point. These days, our evening prayer rule is to say the Lord's Prayer. Then each person thanks God for some things that they are feeling in that moment. We pray for special people in our lives, and end with "Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us."

If it is hard, know that you are not alone! Ask other parents what tools they use to keep their kids engaged – you will come across some great ideas.

"The goal is not to say every prayer in your book, but simply to make prayer part of your family's culture and daily routine." – Blueprints for the Little Church



## Family Wellness Ministry Reflection

### Introducing Evening Prayer *by Anna Warren*

*"It is of great significance if there is a person who truly prays in a family. Prayer attracts God's Grace and all the members of the family feel it, even those whose hearts have grown cold. Pray always." —Elder Thaddeus*

Forming an idea of the prayers you want to say as a family (your "prayer rule"), and creating a sacred space for prayer in your home are essential steps toward praying as a family, however this seemingly simple goal can be very difficult to achieve. Setting aside a special time to pray together is important. Evening can be a natural time for families to gather and say a closing prayer for the day.

Each family's prayer time can look very different. Choosing a prayer rule that is achievable for your family members will help to make it easier to be consistent in following it. If your household has people with longer attention spans, you may want to challenge yourselves to take the 5 minutes or so to say the entire Evening Prayer from your Prayer Book.

#### Helpful resources

*A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*

*Children's Orthodox Prayer Book - with instructional notes by Priest Steven Allen and drawings by Olga Yaremenko*

*Hear Me, a prayerbook for Orthodox young adults, by Annalisa Boyd*

*We Pray* (a children's book about prayer with supplements available for download) by Daniel G. Opperwall

Visit the "Prayer" section of the Holy Apostles website:  
[www.holyapostlesgo.org/prayer](http://www.holyapostlesgo.org/prayer)

On the other hand, if your family has younger members you will probably want to start smaller. Teaching your young child a simple ritual of saying the Jesus Prayer in front of an icon is a beautiful way to start. A little step further would be to say the Lord's Prayer together in your icon area, followed by personal prayers of thanks. From there you can add more small prayers as your family is ready.

When our oldest was a toddler we just let her play nearby while we did our regular evening prayers, but as our kids grew older we weren't able to pray all together. Eventually we settled on what has turned out to be the best mixture for our family at this point. These days, our evening prayer rule is to say the Lord's Prayer. Then each person thanks God for some things that they are feeling in that moment. We pray for special people in our lives, and end with "Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us."

If it is hard, know that you are not alone! Ask other parents what tools they use to keep their kids engaged – you will come across some great ideas.

"The goal is not to say every prayer in your book, but simply to make prayer part of your family's culture and daily routine." – Blueprints for the Little Church