

## AUTHENTIC FAITH: STAYING CONNECTED

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I think we can all relate to poor Eutychus. I have nodded off in church with no more excuse than a late night and a stressful morning getting everyone ready. Eutychus nodded off (literally off a ledge) during an overnight service. But I can relate to Eutychus on a deeper level too: being present, but not present in God's community.



God wants us to be in a community of believers in learning, worshiping, and serving. The people in the upper room that night were there to be part of something unique and exciting: worshiping God and learning from Paul in an all-nighter! Eutychus was there, but his weariness overcame his ability to remain alert. I think we can relate to that too: sitting in church thinking about the big game or what to have for Sunday dinner, or mentally scheduling the week ahead. Or simply just being tired. When the brain snaps back to attention, we often think, "Oof! What did I just miss?" This was harder as churches became remote during the pandemic. Suddenly we could have church on our couches. We could get up and warm our coffee, fold a load of clothes, or answer a text.

How do we teach our children to be present and alert in all facets of God's community?

1. Gathering together. Go to church, physically or virtually. Show up rested. This seems obvious, but it can be hard some mornings. Eutychus became a part of God's story just by showing up.
2. Stay active. If your church sends out an outline of the sermon ahead of time, "preheat the oven" by reading the Bible passage and maybe singing some of the songs. Before the service starts, go over the bulletin with your children. Look at the order of worship. See if they can find connections between the songs and the sermon. During the sermon, take notes or draw pictures about the message. Write down three questions to ask each other afterward. Keep alert to what God is doing in the service. Don't fall out of a mental (or physical) window.
3. Connect with others. Join a small group, and make it a priority. Take time to meet with friends. Walk over and talk to a neighbor. Chat with a new person at a sporting event. Keep alert for opportunities for service, big or small. The whole community was blessed when Eutychus was raised from the dead. How can you be a blessing to those around you?

Will we still struggle sometimes to stay alert and connected? Probably. Eutychus had a literal "fall," but Paul restored him, to the comfort of all. Keeping alert and connected is for everyone's benefit.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Being Present with Our Kids](#).

*written by Heather Altena*