

## LEARNING TO PRAY IN COMMUNITY

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Praying together teaches us to love God more, helps us love others better, and reminds us we are loved. But for children (and us), it can be scary and uncomfortable sometimes. How can we help our children overcome their concerns?

### ***A Community of Love***

Any relationship needs to be chosen over and over again. We choose to love God every time we decide to pray. We know prayer is more for our benefit than for an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God, but when we pray, we intentionally speak to him, listen to him, and spend time with him. And this repetitive practice helps us feel his presence, peace, and love for us.



But communal prayer is about more than our relationship with God. It also helps us love others better. We hear their needs, struggles, triumphs, and joys. We get to mourn, celebrate, rage, and rejoice with them. And when we lift them up to God, we open our hearts and allow God to fill us with a deep love for them.

In the same vein, when we're the ones being lifted up in prayer, we get to witness our community's love for us. We and our children are reminded that we're worthy of their attention and concern and that they believe we are important enough to bring us before our King.

### ***Learning to Pray Confidently***

Sometimes, children might feel worried about what to say when praying with others. They get nervous that someone might tease them when they pray together. They feel bad about sharing something exciting because they're worried it might make someone else jealous. These are all real and common concerns, so here are a few ways you can help your child overcome them:

1. If you know that a group prayer time is coming up, encourage them to write their prayers beforehand so they won't be put on the spot.
2. Help them find a group of friends they feel comfortable being vulnerable with. If members of their core group of friends are already Christians, encourage them to try praying with their friends. Or you could invite Christian families over for playdates or dinners so your children can get to know each other better.
3. Pray with them as a family and let them lead the prayers, or give them a chance to share something so they can practice praying in a safe and loving environment.
4. Remind them that part of being a family is that "When others are happy, [we should] be happy with them, and when they are sad, be sad" ([Romans 12:15](#)). This means that it's okay to share about something exciting that happened, as long as we're not bragging about it.

Praying together is essential, but it can take practice and time to do it confidently. Looking for more information about family prayer time? Please check out [Kids Corner's Faith Practices for Families: Prayer eBook](#).

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Praying with your Children](#).

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