

ECE News & Food for Thought

ECE News

The ECE is gearing up for spring! We will be learning about some of the wonders of God's creation by witnessing the hatching of baby chicks. We are also practicing songs that we will be sharing with the congregation on Sunday, March 25th (Palm Sunday) at the 10:30 service!

Upcoming Dates

Friday, March 16th - Spring Pictures

Saturday, March 17th - Dr. Seuss Family Fun

Sunday, March 25th - Preschool to sing at 10:30 service (Palm Sunday)

Thursday, March 29th-Tuesday, April 3rd - No School (Easter Break)

Monday, April 16th - Friday, April 20th - Week of the Young Child

Food for Thought

How to Embrace Your Not-So-Quiet Time

By: Phylcia Masonheimer



I'm reading the Bible chronologically this year. Every morning finds my clunky, awkward journaling bible propped halfway between an armchair and an endtable, coffee spilling with each elbow bump as I turn pages with one hand and hold my nursing baby with the other. Sometimes my eyes are so heavy I can't remember which part of the Tabernacle I was reading about two minutes before. Sometimes I re-read a passage three times as my two-year-old interrupts with tears or toys.

My quiet time is not so quiet. And if you're a mama to young children, I'm guessing yours isn't either. As a single woman, I spent a good forty-five minutes each day studying the Word. I loved digging into the word definitions, looking up place names in my bible dictionary, and flipping through commentaries. Now those books sit on the other side of my arm chair, but I don't use them as much as I did before. But there is a truth in this season we too often miss. *God still meets me here.*

OUR EVER PRESENT FATHER

Here, as I “let the little children come” scrambling into my lap, as I lay aside the bible to deal with a tantrum, God is just as present as in those days of uninterrupted study. And His Word is just as accessible, applicable, and true.

When I had my first daughter, I struggled with this adjustment. It felt “wrong”; like I couldn’t be as close to God because of the demands on my time. But God is not confined to our quiet time ideal. He is not met only in armchairs.

Throughout the Word we see God meeting His saints as they were on the run, as they slept on rocks, when they wanted to give up, and when the demands of life were too much for them. Jesus is not an armchair parent. He is an *ever-present Help*.

The struggle comes when I know I need Him, but my own children prevent me from getting there. I *want* to seek God – yet when I sit down, someone cries, screams, or spits up, and now I’m angry at the interruption. I tell myself I wouldn’t be angry *if I could just have my dang quiet time!!* (Inner thought processes transcribed here.) I’ve had to reframe my view. It’s when my toddler is weeping and my baby is crying that He is nearest, because He gently leads those who are with young ([Isaiah 40:11](#)). He is not a Father of unrealistic demands. He is a Father who wants us to seek Him. And it’s just as possible to call upon the name of the Lord while changing diapers as it is during a 30-minute prayer session.

THE PROBLEM WITH QUIET TIMES

God is also a worker. He meets us in our work. As we enter our days of young children, we may be weary – but [we can still be in the center of His will](#). There is not a “quiet time” checklist we must fulfill. There is no requirement that time with God even BE quiet. In fact, many of the saints in Scripture worshiped *corporately*, and most of Paul’s letters were narrated to another person. There are very few passages in Scripture to imply the quiet-time model we use today. One of the only instances is [Matthew 6:5-6](#), Jesus’ discussion of prayer:

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Yet even here, Jesus is not saying prayer must always happen in a secret place. He’s making a comparison between *hypocritical prayer* and *a true spirit of prayer*. He’s telling us to pray with hearts that don’t need to be seen; to pray like a child talks to her Father, with nothing to prove.

I fear that today’s quiet time model is the new street corner. The quieter the time, the cuter the coffee mug, the longer the study and better the Instagram post, the more value we attribute. When our seasons change and this model is no longer realistic, we feel distant from God – because we assumed we could only know Him in a quiet place.

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME

Instead of hiding our devotion to God from our children – tucking Him into the recesses of our day, where our relationship cannot be seen – perhaps we should use this season to *live Him before them*. Instead of resenting the shuffle of bible and baby to let them see our effort; to let them see us draw near.

A few days ago both my girls were crying at the same time, I didn't get much sleep, and my plan for a smooth morning was quickly going down the tubes. I stood in my living room holding a wailing infant with the older child wailing on the couch, and I, too, started to cry. "This is TOO MUCH!" I told the Lord aloud. "Why can't they listen? Why can't it just go *smoothly* the one day I need it to?"

Adeline, my toddler, stopped crying. She stared at me as I continued to pour out my heart to God. Slowly she walked over, her little face both curious and full of concern. She had seen me angry before, but she had never seen me do anything with my anger because I dealt with it behind closed doors. But I didn't have time for that this day. This day, I needed God's presence in the *very midst* of overwhelm, and my children watched me draw near.

Let them see you love Him.

Let the little children come to Him through you.

INVOLVING THEM IN YOUR QUIET TIME

As practical as I am, I realize these concepts must be worked out in real life. Following are some things you can do to involve your children in your time with God.

GIVE THEM THEIR OWN BIBLE

Even from as young as two, children can engage with Scripture. Adeline has several bibles for different purposes. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* is what we use for "devotions", reading at meals, for Advent, or for bedtime. *The Prayer Bible* is one that can grow as she does. This is an full-length bible (International Children's Bible version, written specifically for children) that includes sections on how to pray for friends, why we get distracted when we pray, how to pray when afraid, and many other topics. It also includes a prayer journal the child can use when old enough to write. Throughout Scripture, there are inserts containing prayers based on the bible passage adjacent (e.g., "prayer based on [Ephesians 1](#)).

LET THEM JOIN YOUR OWN DEVOTIONS

Adeline will listen to me read my daily section of Scripture aloud if she can sit with me. Many times, it's more about being *with* you than what is being read.

CREATE A "QUIET TIME" OF THEIR OWN

I will often set Adeline and Eva on a blanket on the floor, put in a CD of children's worship music (or play it on Amazon Music; Hide 'Em in Your Heart is a favorite from my own childhood), and give them some books to read. Adeline loves to "read" to Geneva so it works well for them both. Some other favorite books to use:

- Bible Basics
- The Greatest Story ABC
- The Ology (older children)
- Jesus is With Me
- Eloise Wilkin's Prayers for Children

This new, not-so-quiet-time is not forever. It's a season. But we can live that season well.