

TIME-IN WITH GOD

“God to enfold me, God to surround me, God in my speaking, God in my thinking.
 God in my sleeping, God in my waking, God in my watching, God in my hoping.
 God in my life, God in my lips, God in my soul, God in my heart.”

— Celtic prayer

Imagine the sense of well-being that would come to children if they were called, every hour on the hour, to sit in a “time-in chair” where they would experience affirmation, nurturing, and tender, specialized care. This time-in place would be the opposite of the time-out chair, where there is rebuke, remorse, and regret. Time-in brings restoration, redemption, and refreshment. **This is the invitation of fixed-hour prayer, which we call time-in with God.**



When we stop regularly to pray throughout the day, we are accepting God’s invitation to be aware that he is near. We are pausing to enjoy and recognize the security that comes from him abiding with us, staying with us continually. **We interrupt our day to direct our attention toward the One we love most.** This wonderful rhythm of prayer brings the joy of community, too, because we are joining God’s people all around the world as together we praise him and petition him every hour of the day and night.

Time-in with God calls us to engage with the reality of his unceasing love. *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness* (Lamentations 3:23). He crafts specific and unique mercies just for us and just for our present circumstances. Every hour, he is pouring out his love to us. Do we stop long enough, like the psalmist, to be thoroughly aware of that care? David wrote in Psalm 119:164, ***I will praise you seven times a day, because all your regulations are just.*** And Psalm 113:3 echoes that commitment: *From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!*

What if the fixed-hour prayers we already have were more meaningful? What if our mealtime and bedtime prayers had greater significance? What if we really stood before the throne of God to honor him multiple times a day? What if we really climbed up onto his lap often to be welcomed and reassured? What if we really reached up to be steadied by his guiding hand as we walked through each hour?

Imagine the difference it makes when children habitually and repetitively focus on the love of God toward them. Over and over, they can pause in deliberate acknowledgement that God is next to them, surrounding them, helping them.

TIME-IN WITH GOD

INVITATIONS TO ENGAGE

Start the conversation with your child!

“Come and sit with me a minute. I want to share an invitation from God that will make your days filled with hugs and comfort.”

EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-6 years old)

Psalm 113:3 tells us, *From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!*

We are going to draw some big music notes on these four pieces of paper. They are going to remind us to stop and sing or talk to God many times throughout the day. One page goes by your pillow for wakeup and goodnight prayers. Where shall we put one for halfway through the morning and halfway through the afternoon? Then we will put one at the kitchen table for all three mealtimes. When it's time to stop and have a special time-in with God, we will sing our time-in song and have a minute of quiet.

(See the bottom of this guide for some examples of time-in songs. You might make up some actions for the songs, ending with a self-hug.)

ELEMENTARY AGE (5-10 years old)

Read Psalm 113:3 for me. Listen to this prayer list (*read Celtic prayer at top of the first page of this resource*). Now let's talk about how much of the day that prayer covers.

Let's take that old prayer and rewrite it so that it is from your heart to God. What words would you put into the prayer to focus on God throughout the day?

We'll stop many times each day to pray your prayer together.

PRETEEN/EARLY ADOLESCENT (10-14 years old)

Let's listen to this "All Day Song." (*See Recommended Resources below.*)

Now, let's read Psalm 119:164 together. How many times did the writer David stop to pay attention to God during the day? He had pressures like we all do. In what part of the day do you feel most distant or disoriented from the presence of God? **It's in times like those that we most need to seek him! That's when we need some time-in with God!**

Let's prepare for those times by planning time-in moments for the pressure points of our days. What would help remind you to stop for time-in with God? (*Suggestions: Drawing a clock on the notebook for each class; putting a special eraser on a pencil; or putting a sticker on a computer.*)

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Fixed Hour Prayers for Families, from the Transforming Center, by Charity Barton McClure (daughter of Ruth Haley Barton):
<https://transformingcenter.org/downloadables>

Praise Him Praise Him, by Carey Bonner:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Srbmk3zrsss

Praise Him 'Til the Sun Goes Down, by Carman:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=unMMI2LUtL4

All Day Song (Love Him in the Morning), by John Fischer:
<https://johnfischer.bandcamp.com/track/all-day-song-love-him-in-the-morning>