

COMMIT YOUR TIME

LESSON FIVE

Follow up *(As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Kind Actions.)*

1. What are some of the ways we are showing more kindness in our family?
2. Can someone share an experience he or she had obeying The Golden Rule?
(Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.)

Concept

A garden grows well when someone spends time watering and cultivating it. Just like a garden, our family needs us to give our time and effort for it to be successful.

Although our jobs, school, and hobbies are important, our family should be the first priority in our lives. We should be willing to give our family both quality and quantity time.

Quality time means that when we are with one another we are 100% “there,” focused on family members’ needs and happiness. Quantity time means that we are with our families as often as we can be. This is a challenge sometimes, but when family relationships are truly our highest priority, time needs to be given to those relationships. There is no substitute for unhurried time with our loved ones.

Families are like teams--they work together to reach the same goals. Both parents and children have very important positions on the team and everyone is needed to make it work well. What happens to an athletic team when they don’t work together? Usually they don’t win. On the other hand, individual players on winning teams are committed to the success of the whole team. They give of themselves, they support and help one another, and they usually do it enthusiastically. Those are good ingredients for a family, also. As we commit our time and hearts to our family, we can reach our goals and “win” in the game of life.

When a person comes to the end of his life, would he reflect on his life saying, “I wish I would’ve spent more time in the office.” Relationships are built on time spent together. Time is precious. It is what lives are made of. Giving our time and hearts to our family shows our love for them.

Family Survey Review

Statement #5. **We enjoy doing things together as a family.**

- How can we make our family activities more fun?
- Ask yourself silently, “Can I improve my attitude or my support of family activities?”

Story

Little Kevin ran happily to greet his father when he came home from work. Cheerfully Kevin exclaimed, “Daddy, I’ve been waiting for you! I wanted you to come home and read this to me!” Kevin held his book up as high as he could, showing it to his father. John answered his son tiredly, “Yes, I’ll read the book to you after dinner.”

After dinner John received a telephone call and waved Kevin away with annoyance when Kevin reminded him about the book. After the little boy’s bath he found his Dad, who had just sat down to enjoy the evening newspaper. “Daddy, when you finish reading your paper, can you read my book to me?” “Sure, Kevin,” was John’s reply as he kept his eyes on the newspaper.

An hour later John remembered his promise to Kevin, and hurried up the stairs to his son’s room. John found the little boy, fast asleep, with tear-stained cheeks. Kevin’s unread book was lying open across his small chest.

Discussion

1. What should the father in the story have done differently?
2. Children, do you ever want your family to spend more time with you?
3. What can we do to give more time to our family?

Activity

For our activity, let’s each think of one thing we would really enjoy doing as a family. Now let’s make a list of all the fun activities our family would like to do.

Next, let’s decide on one family activity we will do soon. We’ll put it on the calendar and plan how to do it. All of us can help plan, and help with the preparations. Then let’s DO our family activity.

Assignment

Choose to do one or more of the activities which follow this lesson:

1. Family Time
2. Family Dates
3. Solution Suggestions (Choose to do as many as you’d like.)

ACTIVITY

FAMILY TIME

Strong families enjoy being together, and they make the effort to plan activities to be with one another. Family time doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive. The simplest activities often become the most memorable. Family time can be as simple as sharing a family joke or enjoying a favorite tradition, such as Saturday morning pancakes or a family walk on Sunday afternoons.

Often when children are asked, "What makes a happy family?" they answer, "Doing things together!" It may seem so obvious that it gets overlooked, but doing things together as a family builds family unity.

Sometimes it's difficult for family members to find the time for family togetherness with work, school, church, and community responsibilities. But the real test of our commitment to our family is the amount of time we spend together. We may have heard that it is quality, not quantity, time spent with children that is important. Since time is at a premium, it is important to spend family "quality time." However, it's also important to spend quantities of time in order to create close relationships with family members. Usually when family members spend time with one another they feel more comfortable sharing their deepest feelings.

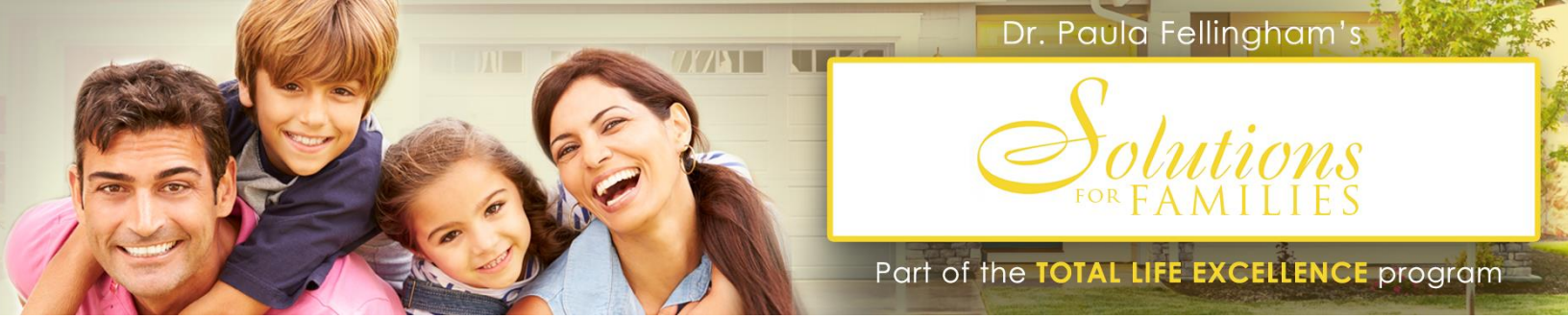
Activity--Our Family Time

To begin investing more time together as a family, it's helpful to assess how we *now* spend our time. We can then decide if that's the way we want to live our lives.

- Take a paper plate and draw lines to divide it into 24 sections for the hours of the day. Divide the plate into thirds, then each third into halves, then each half into fourths. That makes 24 sections.
- Write in the things that absolutely must happen every day. What are those? (*Eating, sleeping, working, going to school.*) Now write in the other things we do each day.

Ask the following questions:

1. Are we spending our time as we wish?
2. How would we like to spend our time?
3. What is preventing us from spending our time as we want?
4. What can we change so that we can spend our time as we would like to?



Dr. Paula Fellingham's

Solutions
FOR FAMILIES

Part of the **TOTAL LIFE EXCELLENCE** program

(Some things we can't change. Concentrate on the things we can change).

Ideas for maximizing time together:

- Eat at least one meal together, as a family, every day.
- Take up an exercise that can be shared with children.
- Work together on household chores rather than assigning separate tasks to each family member.
- Make community service something that will involve several family members, such as coaching a team or being a club leader.
- Turn off the television and play a game. If watching television, discuss the program together.
- Sit by children while they eat breakfast, even if parent skips breakfast.
- Develop the habit of chatting with one another while preparing or cleaning up meals.

Family vacations can be special times that secure family relationships, especially if everyone is involved in the planning and preparation. From planning the vacation to reliving it with pictures and mementos, a family vacation can be an opportunity to reinforce relationships with family members.

A few years from now as we reflect back on the good times with our families, the time we spent together will probably mean more than the remodeled room or new furniture we worked two jobs to be able to afford. Spending time with your family isn't a luxury; it's a necessity.

Activity--Give the Gift of Time

One of the ways we show affection and appreciation is by doing things for people. We also show we care by spending time together. The following activity can help you give your family the gift of time.

5. Decide on something special you will do for someone in your family.
For example:
 - Lunch or dinner date
 - Car wash
 - Help with laundry, homework, yard-work, etc.
 - Ice cream cone treat
 - Movie or video "date"
6. Decide how often you want to give the "gift" (monthly, weekly, etc.)
7. Make a "credit card" issued in the name of the family member, with a description of your gift. Put a space for them to sign it.
8. Mail it to them in the same way they would receive a new credit card.
9. Each time the card is used, punch or mark it. Make sure the credit card is used and enjoyed.

FAMILY DATES

- At the start of each month parents and children schedule a date for spending one-on-one time with each other. If desired, make a Family Date Plan (like the one below) to help organize the dates.
- Mark all family dates on the calendar. Only emergencies can interfere with these dates.
- In two-parent families, Mom and Dad can schedule dates with each other--as well as with the children.

[illegible]

SOLUTION SUGGESTIONS

10. Start a new family tradition.
11. Parents, tell your children stories about your ancestors and your childhood.
12. Schedule a family activity, and do it.
13. Parents, go on a special date.
14. Children, have an unhurried heart-to-heart talk with a brother, sister or parent.
15. Invite another family over for a movie and popcorn.
16. Eat together as a family, one meal a day, for at least one week.
17. Plan a family vacation. It could be a one day vacation!
18. Schedule a fun family activity for the next holiday.
19. Parent(s), take your children see what you do at work and let them meet your co-workers.
20. Bake something together as a family.
21. Each person in the family do a kind deed for another family member anonymously.
22. Go on a picnic as a family.
23. Write a letter to a family member far away.
24. As a family participate in a service project--any kind that helps someone.
25. Have a family game night. Play board games and/or outdoor games.
26. Keep your family history alive by writing in personal and family journals.
27. Parents, set regular times to read aloud to your young children. Select books that build character.
28. Participate in a family hobby.
29. Plan and go on a camping trip as a family.