



Issue 30

# SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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## Five Reasons to Teach Your Children to Pray

Pr Cyril Sweeney - BUC Director for Family Ministry

I read a blog published 11.00 am on Monday 16th March 2015 by Janet Denison. Having read it, I thought this is something valuable for all parents and children to be reminded of. Janet begins by highlighting the fact that we teach our children the colours of the world and how to count their fingers and toes. We teach them how to say “thank you” when they should be grateful and “I am sorry” if they have made a mistake. We teach our children not to communicate what they are thinking and feeling. It is important that we teach them how to talk to others. It is crucial that we teach them how to talk with God.

Most mothers value the benefits of breast feeding new born babes on the milk her body naturally produces and which is eagerly consumed by the hungry infant. Her child, however, cannot grow and succeed unless he is weaned and learns to eat for himself. It is generally observed that content Christians are those who have learned how to spend time with God alone, growing and learning from that which they “consume” on

their own. Prayer is a good way to begin the “weaning process” and raise children who will be strong, mature believers and followers of Jesus.

What will your child learn if you teach them to pray?

They will learn that God is real, and that He is God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray saying, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9, 10). When we teach our children pray, we teach them to talk to the Creator of the world who is listening in heaven. When we honour God’s name, we honour Him as our King. When children pray, they will understand that they have access to the God of the universe and He wants to talk with them about His will for their lives. God wants to be their King.

Prayer is the way they will develop a close, personal relationship with God. “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalms 46:10). The strongest relationships in our lives are with people we have chosen to spend time with in a quiet, exclusive way. The same is true of our relationship with God. If the only time your child spends with God is in the presence of other people, then God is most likely to remain an “acquaintance” rather than a close, personal friend. Teach your children to be still and to spend time alone with God.

They will learn that God loves them and listens to their prayers. Jesus said, “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:13, 14). It is normal for children to pray for everything they want, and to expect God to do whatever they ask of Him. Most parents struggle with helping their child understand that God’s answers to prayer are not always the same as their requests.

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

# SEC FAMILY

Jesus said, “If you ask in my name, I will do it.” He said, when you ask for what His holy and perfect character wants to give or do, He will do it. When children pray they will learn that God loves them too much to give them something that is not perfect. They will also see their prayers answered, just as they asked. God loves to show his children that he loves them and listens to them. When children pray, they will see God answer and know He heard their prayers.



Children will learn that God’s answers are unique and important. “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).

Children will often ask parents or friends for advice. One of the most important things a child can learn is that the only perfect advice is God’s. God’s answers are unique wisdom that can only be gained by “calling on Him.” One of the reasons parents need to “wean” their children spiritually is so that their children will learn to turn to God for the answers that are “hidden” and that cannot be “known” any other way. That is a

lesson that will carry them through life. (And it can make the high school and college years a little less stressful for parents!)

Prayer will teach your children that when they make a mistake, there is help and forgiveness available to them, to make it right. “If we confess our sins, He is able faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Prayer will help your children understand God’s will for their lives, and that nobody makes perfect choices. Prayer is the first and best response when your children need discipline. Prayer teaches them that God knows their failure and has a plan to redeem. When a parent prays with their child and ask God for wisdom to know how to discipline, the child is much more likely to learn from that discipline. Your child will learn that they need to make their mistakes right with God and right with others. Prayer will show your child that there is both consequence and forgiveness for mistakes and teach them that God redeems for His greater purpose (see Romans 8:28).

We know that our children must be weaned physically if they are to grow and become successful adults. God calls us, as parents, to wean our children spiritually as well. Prayer is one of the best ways to introduce your toddler to God. A prayer-filled life will teach children to grow from a toddler relationship to a strong walk with God as their King. Our children deserve the chance to become all that God has called them to be and prayer is key to providing them that opportunity.



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you” (Jeremiah 29:11, 12).



Adventist  
*Family* Ministries

  
*Family* TO *Family*  
*Because relationships need to be nurtured*

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By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35



## The Gift of Presence

Pr Les Ackie

It is that time of year when countless numbers of expectant children and ‘young at heart’ adults, get excited at the prospect of the Christmas presents they will receive. However, long after the novelty of those gifts have faded, what will be remembered most will be the precious gift of our presence.

The Apostle Paul admonishes us, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). While Paul speaks within the context of supplying material needs, the passage has a wider application. This passage is one of several in the Bible which teach that the way we relate to one another is an accurate barometre of our relationship with God. In addition to the basic necessities of life required for our physical wellbeing, our families have legitimate spiritual and emotional needs that cry out for attention. Giving this due attention involves an investment of time, and how we choose to spend our time is an accurate measure of the things we value the most.

Our families must be prioritised. Otherwise, quality time will be swallowed up by the increasing demands of making ends meet, doing taxi service for the children, fulfilling church responsibilities etc. etc. etc. Because our time is so limited, it needs to be budgeted in the same way that our limited finances require responsible allocation. Time that is not budgeted tends to fall victim to the tyranny of the urgent, or flow in the direction of our weaknesses. Stephen Covey made the profound observation that, “No one ever said on their deathbed, ‘I wish I spent more time at the office.’” The greatest regrets in life are often the failure to cultivate our most important relationships.

When God says, “Therefore shall a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife,” this represents a shift in relational priorities. But this shift is not only limited to the time we give to our parents in relation to our spouse. The principle also includes the prioritisation of our relationships with those we choose to call family. As Christians there can be a tendency to neglect our families because we are, “about our Father’s business.” However, our order of priority should be “God, family, church”, not “God, church, family”. Ellen White emphasises this when she states, “Men and women, children and youth are measured in the scales of heaven in accordance with that which they reveal in their home life” (*Sons & Daughters of God*, 255). In regard to family responsibilities we are also counselled that, “If he [husband] is engaged in business which almost wholly closes the door of usefulness to his family, he should seek other employment . . .” (*The Adventist Home*, 221). Second only to our relationship with God, meeting the needs of our families should be our top priority.

Making time for each other is not just about spending time in each other’s physical presence. Proximity and togetherness are not the same thing. Proximity has to do with location, while the gift of presence has to do with an intimate heart connection, doing things together, taking time to listen to one another and showing genuine interest. Quality time involves giving undivided individual attention in a way that communicates care and value. Again we are urged, “. . . spend as much time as possible with your children. Seek to become acquainted with their various dispositions, that you may know how to train them in harmony with the word of God” (*The Adventist Home*, 222).

Christmas, we are told, is all about giving. God Himself has demonstrated the ultimate gift, “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Our gift of presence to one another should be a reflection of the greatest gift of presence, “Emmanuel, God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

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EVERYONE | EVERYWHERE

SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE  
**EVANGELISM**  
XPO 2016


10 JAN 2016 ~ 9.30AM - 5.00PM ~ NEWBOLD

ALL SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE PASTORS AND MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO THIS SPECIAL ONE-DAY TRAINING EVENT. GREAT CHOICE OF MATERIALS FROM DEPARTMENTS TO EXPLORE AND PURCHASE.

FOR MORE INFO: 01923 656502 OR VISIT [SEC.ADVENTIST.ORG.UK](http://SEC.ADVENTIST.ORG.UK)



The SEC Family Ministry  
Marriage Retreat 

*Blended  
Hearts*

An exploration of biblical principles to nurture love, trust and emotional bonding

 Presenters:  
Irma & Les  
Ackie

**18th - 20th March 2016**

Venue: Wokefield Park, Goodboys Lane, Mortimer, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3AE

Cost: £250 per couple (subsidies and split payments available for early booking)

Register at [sec.adventist.org.uk/events](http://sec.adventist.org.uk/events)

## Stanborough Secondary School Scholarships & Bursaries

Once again, Stanborough Secondary School has worked hard to secure additional funding for the Scholarship and Bursary Fund, to enable more pupils across the UK to benefit from a quality education.

Stanborough School's Scholarship scheme aims to make Adventist Education more accessible to outstanding students. Candidates must apply for entry for the following academic year and demonstrate academic potential.

Stanborough School's Bursary scheme aims to support families that are currently opting out of the Adventist education system due to financial considerations. Candidates will be required to demonstrate both academic potential and financial need.

Both types of award are multiannual and will provide up to 8 places for prospective students applying for entry in Year 7 to Year 10. The scholarships awarded range from 25% - 50% of tuition fees. While students awarded bursaries receive £1000-£2500 per year.

Candidates must register and pay an administrative fee of £10. The examination will be held on the 14th of January 2016 from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Registration closes 7th of January 2016. To download application forms, please visit <http://www.spsch.org/scholarships/>.

Stanborough School would like to thank the Alumni and Friends of the School for making this support possible.

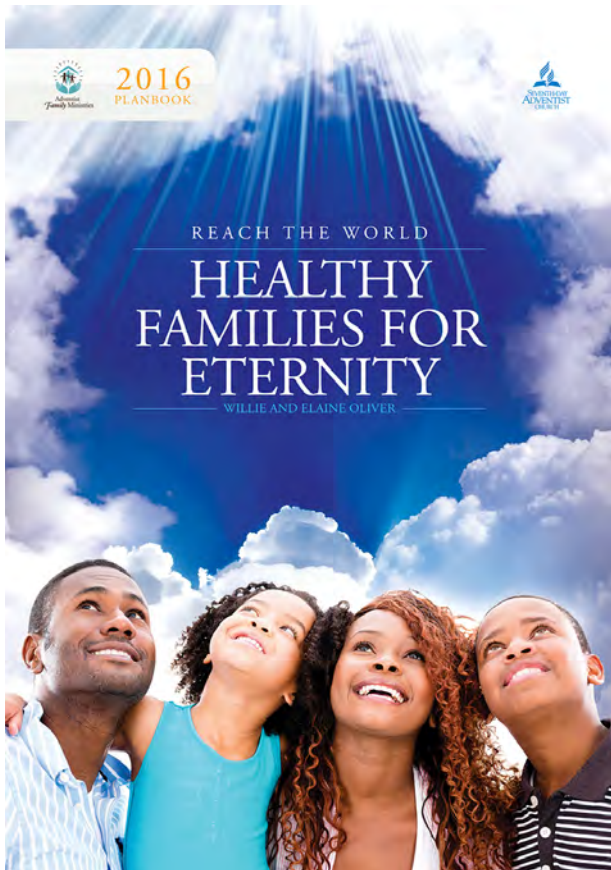


VISIT US



STANBOROUGH SCHOOL  
Stanborough Park  
Watford WD25 9JT  
01923 673 268

[WWW.SPSCH.ORG](http://WWW.SPSCH.ORG)



Click on the link to download the Family Ministry Planbook at <http://family.adventist.org/family-ministry-planbook.html>

## SINGLES RETREAT 2016

15th-17th July 2016

### Cultivate Purpose & Let God

Finding peace, happiness and spiritual fulfilment with yourself & how to create space for another person

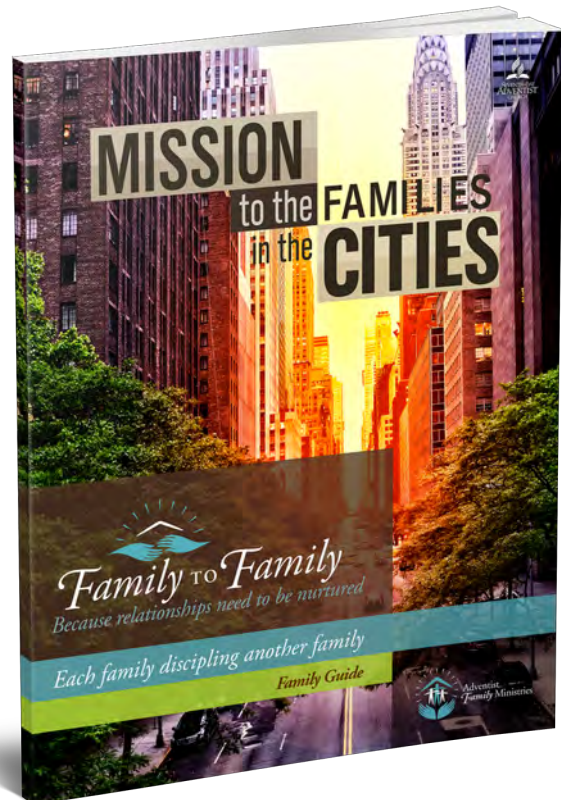
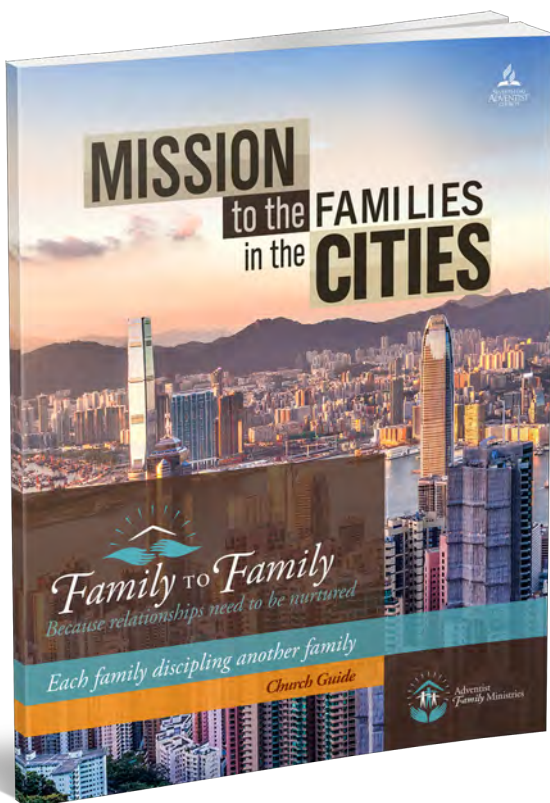


Guest Speaker:  
Pastor  
Dewayne Frazer

Venue: De Vere Venues | Wokefield Park | Goodboys Lane | Reading | RG7 3AH  
Price: £149/person (double occupancy) & £159 (single occupancy)  
Limited spaces.....book your space now for this empowering event, you will surely be blessed and uplifted.

A non refundable deposit of £50 is required to secure your place by 30 January 2016 and the full amount should be paid in by 31 March 2016.  
We accept payment in instalments.  
Bank Details: Lloyds Bank Sort Code: 308676. Account no: 60146660  
Please put: TSR as reference

For enquiries, please contact:  
Christina Mthombeni: 07926 102 187 or Sister Patience: 07908 713 561



Click on the link to download the Mission to the Families guides at <http://family.adventist.org/mission-to-the-families-in-the-cities-family-to-family.html>

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

## Useful Links

AdventSource -  
[www.adventsource.org/](http://www.adventsource.org/)

Adventist Parenting -  
[www.adventistparenting.com](http://www.adventistparenting.com)

Adventist Special Needs  
Association - [www.asna.info/](http://www.asna.info/)

BUC Family Ministry-  
[adventist.org.uk/who-we-are/  
departments/family-ministries](http://adventist.org.uk/who-we-are/departments/family-ministries)

The Ellen G. White Estate -  
[www.whiteestate.org/](http://www.whiteestate.org/)

GC Family Ministry -  
[family.adventist.org](http://family.adventist.org)

Hope Channel - [www.hopetv.org](http://www.hopetv.org)

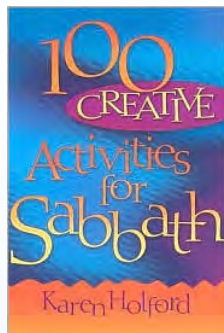
Kids in Discipleship -  
[www.kidsindiscipleship.org/](http://www.kidsindiscipleship.org/)

North American Division Family  
Ministry - [family.nadadventist.org](http://family.nadadventist.org)

SEC Family Ministries  
[secadventist.org.uk/who-we-are/  
departments/family-ministries](http://secadventist.org.uk/who-we-are/departments/family-ministries)

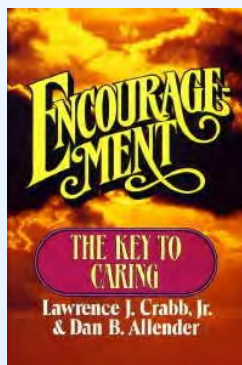
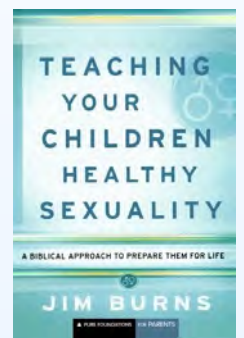
South Pacific Division Family  
Ministry - [www.adventist.org.au/  
family-ministries](http://www.adventist.org.au/family-ministries)

## Recommended Reading



Karen Holford has become the friend of Adventist families everywhere with her creative activity books on prayer (100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids). Now she seeks to restore Sabbath joy for twenty-first century families in *100 Creative Activities for Sabbath*. For parents and caregivers who want their children to treasure our Sabbath heritage, yet struggle with the challenges of modern living, this book is a cause for rejoicing!

In *Teaching Your Children Healthy Sexuality* Jim Burns gives expert advice on how and when to talk with your children, and he provides answers to the most difficult questions your children and teens might ask. This is a clear and concise guide for parents who wish to encourage their children to approach their sexuality as God designed. Every parent should read this book and consider how to share the truths within with their children.



*Encouragement: The Key to Caring*. Drs. Larry Crabb and Dan Allender have filled their book with practical instruction on how to master the basic form of counselling Christians are called to do, following the New Testament admonition to “encourage one another.” It includes step-by-step understanding with a biblical basis that shows the pitfalls to avoid.

## Cornerstone Counselling Service

0207 723 8050  
or [ccs@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:ccs@secadventist.org.uk)

Contact us to speak with a counsellor about issues that trouble you, or to make an appointment.



## REAL Family Talk

with Willie & Elaine Oliver

### Contact Us

SEC Family Ministries  
25 St John's Road  
Watford WD17 1PZ  
[fm@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:fm@secadventist.org.uk)

Pr Les Ackie, Director:  
01923 656 510  
[lackie@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lackie@secadventist.org.uk)  
Ligia Buzac, Secretary:  
01923 656 530  
[lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk)