

# Every Good and Perfect Gift Is from Above

## One Way to Set Aside Dedicated Family Time

The gift of a home and a family is not always first and foremost in a person's thoughts. Yet often when we pause we realize much reason for thankfulness. God provides all that is needed for this body and life, including companions and escorts. We often find our closest escorts in our homes.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). We might consider that “good gifts” are for this life and “perfect gifts” are those spiritual gifts owned through living faith and in this life and the one to come. God gifted to me a believing spouse and children to be with in this life. As His gift, I put my trust in God's plan for me and often find comfort in the words of the Psalm writer, “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” And “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Ps. 127:1,3).

### **Kids on the Go, a New Chapter**

It was a time of life like many busy families. The days passed moving from one task to the next and one event followed another. Our oldest child had recently gotten his driver's license and we enjoyed the help this offered in our family of six children. A new chapter of a teenage driver entered our life. Along with much assistance with errands the freedom and desire to “be on the go” needed balance.

I was busy with my career and serving in the congregation as asked. My wife Barb was busy with the children. We received many blessings of the Heavenly Father in our home and yet felt how the busyness took from our time together as a family. As a family we enjoyed going to the services of God's children each week, as well as to Sunday school and Bible class. Yet enjoying time together at home with each other seemed to be lacking.

### **Home-Family Night Needed**

During one family discussion at church I heard one father encourage listeners to make time together at home for families. This comment stayed with me and visiting with Barb “home night” or “family night” was established. That was twenty years ago. We have gotten together nearly every Thursday evening since. Writing this, I marvel at the blessings of God we have received through each other during this time spent together. Home night still continues.

### **What happens on Family Night? I asked some of our children to answer this question.**

**Janelle** (daughter): When we first started home night I was excited because it meant the older

siblings would all be together for sure that one night a week. We didn't have to do anything special, we could do our own thing, work on homework, visit, and play games. Now, as an adult with my own family, I love that we still do it. I get to see my parents and siblings, get to know all of my nieces and nephews, and my own kids look forward to going to grandpa and grandma's every week.

**Tyler** (son-in-law): Family night is a nice way to keep in touch with the in-laws. I don't make it every week but I know it's always there.

**Michelle** (daughter): Family night is very special to my family. I enjoyed staying home on Thursday evenings, even in high school. I thought once I had a family of my own I wouldn't go anymore but now I appreciate it even more. Also, my kids get to enjoy it now too. Everyone looks forward to it. It's an evening to just relax and enjoy family. Life is so busy, so it's important to take time to spend with loved ones.

**Debby** (daughter): This is one day in the week that our family eagerly awaits. A relaxing evening, special time where we can visit and be together. Adults enjoy visiting and catching up. The kids look forward to playing with cousins. It gets loud and crazy at times but still we're so lucky to be able to spend an evening together each week. Mom and dad started family night years ago when we were "haps" age, and it has continued on now when some of us have kids of our own. I feel it's important and helps to keep a family close as life gets busy. Also, it's the one night we don't have to make dinner. Mom and dad supply pizza, or mom makes dinner for everyone! I feel so fortunate to have a family, loving and caring!

**Katie** (daughter): This has been a tradition for our family for many years. When we were little it was a special evening of playing games and being together. As the years have passed our family has grown, but home night still remains. I still feel that same excitement when each family shows up as I did when I was a child and we were all together. Just being together and enjoying the evening is so heartwarming. When we're able to talk about the way and the journey with our loved ones my heart feels refreshed. In the last few years my work schedule hasn't allowed for me to be there every time, and oh how my heart longs to be there. The Thursdays that I'm able to be home are just that much more special. I'm thankful that we as a family have these evenings! The nieces and nephews look forward to it just as much as I do. It's truly a blessing from God!

**I'm reminded of the words of a song in our hymnal:**

*Like boughs that bear abundance when firmly on the tree,  
as people we're created to with each other be.*

*We thank You for our fam'lies, the life that You established,*

*Your gifts to us, O Lord (SHZ 420:1).*

God has richly blessed us through our home night. I know that one day it may end as our children's families establish their own traditions and life becomes too busy. But for now, we continue to gather.

As we begin the New Year, pause to consider your family's traditions. Ours is one example, and there are many other traditions that have worked in other families. The main thing is that we help and support one another on the journey to heaven. God provides every good and perfect gift, including our family. In heaven, all of God's children will gather together to praise God.

Jim Jurmu

**Discussion Points:**

1. What are some ways you make time for family in your home?
2. Have you considered any new plans for family time in the coming year?
3. What are some of your special "together" memories of growing up in your childhood home?
4. How does spending time together strengthen relationships and our faith?