

CARING CONVERSATIONS—Each week, a topic for discussion is introduced that is connected to the weekly theme introduced by Sunday’s Bible reading. This topic can be used at any time during the week. But it is not by any means the only Caring Conversation you can have—try checking in with “Highs & Lows” (What was the best/worst part of your day?) or “God moments” (Where do you think you saw God’s love active and present today?). **The main point is to be on the look-out for opportunities to move your household’s talk from the surface toward intimacy.**

- In Romans 8:24-25, Paul speaks of hope always being something we can not easily see. Talk about a time when you were anticipating or hoping for something yet to come. What was that waiting like? Was it easy or difficult? What did you find to be helpful during that time of waiting?
- As you read more of Paul’s letters, you will notice that he makes lots of lists. In Romans 8:35-39, we read two separate lists, one in verse 35; one in verses 38 and 39; both of them naming possible ways we might be tempted to believe we have been abandoned by God. If you were to add to that list, what would you add? (For example, a person suffering from cancer might say, “Having cancer tempts me to believe I have been abandoned by God.”) What does Paul say about these things?

DEVOTIONS—One way of thinking about devotions is as a continuation of our community’s worship, or at least as a connection with it. The following basic pattern could be one way of forming your household’s devotions:

- **Gathering Prayer**—This might include a lit candle; the PRAYER FOR THE WEEK from the front; or a suggestion from the RITUAL & TRADITION below.
- **Caring Conversation**—As suggested above, this could be as simple as a daily check in with each other or an extended conversation using the topic(s) suggested above.
- **Daily Bible Reading**—Read aloud from the DAILY BIBLE READING from the front. What do you want to remember from this reading? Households with small children might simply review the basics of the story read from an age-appropriate Bible.
- **Closing Ritual**—Some way of signaling the end: A BLESSING TO SHARE from the front; the Lord’s Prayer; or a song, either sung or recorded. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotion time.

Note: This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with YOUR household’s context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? **Even if you don’t have children in your household, or if you live alone, be creative and flexible with how you practice your devotions.**

SERVICE—SERVICE is how we enact God’s great love for the entire world.

Send a card, visit, or extend some other offering of service, support, and encouragement to someone who might be tempted in his/her suffering to believe he/she has been abandoned by God. Your pastor might be helpful in identifying this person.

RITUALS & TRADITIONS— In Romans 8:26 and 27, Paul lifts up prayer as a vital practice that keeps us connected with the Holy Spirit, however weak we might believe our prayers to be. The rest of our 4-Key Faith Practices very well might also strengthen our sense of God’s Spirit in our lives, as well. Keep practicing!

The “4-Key Faith Practices”—Caring Conversation, Devotion, Service, and Ritual & Traditions—are part of a framework developed by Vibrant Faith Ministries, Bloomington, MN and used by permission. For more information about the Vibrant Faith Frame, go to www.vibrantfaith.org/free-information/vibrant-faith-frame/.

MAY 24, 2015



Sharing GOD’S STORY @ home

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK— The apostle Paul wrote, “If we have been united with Jesus in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like

his.”—Romans 6:5.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK—To be used in a variety of ways over the course of the week—first thing in the morning; before you go to bed; as an opening or closing to household devotion time (see reverse); etc.

Merciful Father, we see in the suffering, death, and resurrection of your Son, that not even death stops you from working hope and life, where there is otherwise hopelessness and death. Breathe into us your life-giving Spirit, that we might be always reminded that neither death, nor life; neither spiritual nor earthly authority; not things in the future nor things today; no power, height, nor depth, not anything else in all of creation can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

A BLESSING TO SHARE—A blessing can be a powerful ritual that reminds us of God’s promises and presence, both through the words, as well as the touch that we share. This can be used as a “good-bye.” It could be used as a bed-time blessing. Be creative in the way you bless and are blessed by the people in your life.

As you mark one another with the sign of the cross on the forehead, say,

“Remember that the Spirit helps you in all your weakness and speaks to God on your behalf with sighs too deep for words to express. Amen.”

DAILY BIBLE READINGS—There are dozens of Scriptures in which the spirit/wind/breath of God blows, giving hope and new life. As you read the daily readings, ask, “**What is the spirit/wind/breath of God doing in creating life or hope?**”

Sunday	Acts 2:1-4 & Romans 8:18-39	Pentecost: Hope in the Spirit of Christ
Monday	Genesis 1:1-5	Creation
Tuesday	Genesis 2:1-7	The Breath of Life
Wednesday	Genesis 8:1-5	A Wind of Hope
Thursday	Exodus 14:21-25	A Wind of Salvation
Friday	Ezekiel 37:1-14	A Breath of Hope and New Life
Saturday	John 20:19-23	The Spirit of New Life and Forgiveness

If you are using a kid-friendly Bible in your household, you will very likely NOT find all of these readings there. **Read to your kids anyway. Just pick a story!**

For a more detailed adult study, go to www.enterthebible.org, a site maintained by Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN.

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