

Help Your Teen Have Regular Quiet Times With These 4 Practical Tips

If I was at all intimidated by writing about how to have effective family devotions, I am certainly much more intimidated by writing about how to help your teen have a quiet time!

I don't have teenagers.

Its been years since I've been a teenager.

But as I've pondered, prayed and prepared for this post, I have been reminded of my own teen years, and I think the central needs of teens don't ever really change.

I will say this, though, if I were a parent of a teen poking around the web to find resources to help my teen develop a quiet time, I'd be very frustrated right now.

There are not many resources (*by people I know and trust, that I feel like I can recommend to my readers*) or even articles on the subject.

I came up empty.

And now I know why so many moms have written to me with desperate cries for help!

In the end I concluded that maybe it is better this way. Maybe it is better that parents and teens use the same resources and learn side-by-side, because at the end of the day, our teens will learn better when we model for them how to have a consistent and effective quiet time.

4 Ways to Help Your Teen Have a Quiet Time

1. Be real. If there is anything I've witnessed about this generation, it's that they are done being sold to. They can smell an advertisement in a New York minute.

They don't want their quiet times to be "cool" with geometric shapes and neon colors, they just want it to be real. If your teen truly has an encounter with Jesus Christ, you won't need to nag them to have a quiet time because they will have taken a bite out of filet mignon, and you won't have to convince them to eat that cheap, microwave dinner some advertiser wants to sell them in the way of a "cool teen devotional" that only talks about locker rooms, hormones and the opposite sex.

Because real life for them goes beyond what our generation watched on *Saved by the Bell*. Teens today are faced with a level of fear and pressure that our generation never had to face. Short, one-page devotionals nicely packaged in succinct words and alliterations won't come close to meeting their needs. They want the hard truth, uncensored and unabridged because that's what they face everyday—a world that is hard, uncensored, R-rated and unabridged.

How will they cope with what they are faced with on a daily basis in public school if they are fed a pabulum gospel?

2. Model it for them. I know it seems like your teen thinks you're a Neanderthal. The real truth that they wouldn't ever dare utter to another living soul is that they really do want to be like you and they're watching you out of the corner of their eye.

I once heard someone say, "What parents do in moderation their children will do in excess." I know he was talking about alcohol on that occasion, but the same is true about our daily, personal relationship with Almighty God.

I remember as a child waking up on occasion very early in the morning, or sometimes even in the middle of the night, and seeing my dad in the living room with his head buried deep in his brown easy chair weeping and praying. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I'd see him like that every morning and, more often than not, in the middle of the night. His relationship with God was front and center, No. 1. His quiet time happened on Saturdays, during vacations—he never took a break from it.

That consistency played a huge role in my life as a teen, because I knew that when *my* prayers were bouncing off the brass ceiling of heaven, his were somehow reaching God.

Maybe that wasn't theologically correct, but as a teen, it gave me the encouragement I needed to keep trying.

My mom was just as consistent. Before she came out of her bedroom, she had been awake for a couple of hours, having spent time in God's Word and prayer. Their consistency in quiet time spoke to me loud and clear that devotions were an essential part of daily life. I haven't always been consistent with them like they are, but in those inconsistent times, I felt a weight of conviction because I knew I needed to be.

How did I know that? It wasn't because my youth group leader told me, but because it was modeled for me Monday-Sunday without fail.

3. Mentor them. I'd venture to guess that most parents of teens feel like I did leading my kids in quiet time: all thumbs, two left feet and clumsy. Am I right?

It's a little intimidating, honestly. But what they really want is for you to mentor them.

I don't know for a fact, but I'd bet that a lot of parents have tried this already and given up when they felt their teen

push back.

You know what? My kids did too at first.

My 4-year-old and 6-year-old didn't want to sing, sit still or listen to me read from the Bible. And had I given up right then, I'd be missing out on their sweet prayers rehearsing their day and thanking God for Thomas the Train, Percy and Captain.

Mentorship is never easy, because the one being mentored doesn't always like what the mentor wants them to do, but don't give up because when you give up, you say to your teen that this isn't worth it for you to keep pushing through the hard times, and if it's not worth it for you, it won't be worth it for them and they'll look for the meaning in life someplace else than at the cross of Jesus.

Here are some resources you can use with your teen to help mentor them:

- Good Morning Girls & Good Morning Guys – Get your teens into God's Word on a daily basis with this amazing online Bible study where they simply read through the Bible one chapter at a time. It's not complicated at all. Have them fill out their journals and then go through them each day, read them, and leave them encouraging notes in the margins.
- Foundational – This is my dad's blog! He has amazing discipleship resources that I have used with teen groups before. They are still available in their old format, but in November will be relaunched with new covers and a new format. He is also getting ready to launch an Online Institute where he will provide leadership, biblical and discipleship classes.
- Time Warp Wife – Here is another great website that has great Bible studies you can buy and do with your teen girls. She already has the following Bible studies up on

her blog and just started a new study called The Amazing Power of Grace.

- Provide them a Bible – I'd suggest ditching the teen Bibles and just go for a normal study Bible that they'll be able to use for many years. Then give them great Bible study resources like gel pens to help them color code their Bibles.
- Get them a notebook and pen to take to church with them so they can take sermon notes, then teach them how to review their notes throughout the week by looking up the Scripture references and finding ways to apply the sermon to their own lives.

4. Don't nag them. If your teen simply shows no interest in a relationship with God, nagging them, preaching to them and punishing them won't help them get there. The best thing you can do for them is to just get on your knees and pray and speak your words in your prayer closet.

Actually, whether or not your teen is in the Word on a consistent basis or not, you need to pray.

While my parents successfully raised three kids in a pastor's home and watched all three go into full-time ministry, it wasn't always very easy. All three of us went through our rough patches, and I know that during those times my dad got very little sleep. He spent many nights pacing the floor and interceding for us.

No matter if your teen is a bonfire for Jesus or as cold as ice, bathe them in prayer.

I highly recommend the book *Power of a Praying Parent* to every parent, as it is an essential resource to teach us how to pray effectively for our children.

Does your teen have a favorite quiet time journal or Bible study? Tell me about it in the comments below and perhaps I'll add it to my list! {eo}

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