

7 Ideas For Parents Who Travel Often

Most of us struggle to find the balance between work and home. We feel like we are stuck in the middle of a tug-of-war between the office and the house, and we can only win at one or the other.

Many live with a constant low-grade guilt about the lack of time with their kids. This struggle seems especially strong for those that travel.

What does it mean to reject passivity and accept responsibility as a father who is on the road?

I'm not a normal business traveler. In fact, my routine typically keeps me busy but close to home. Recently, I've found myself in a pattern of traveling every other week. This new rhythm of life has got me thinking. What does it mean to reject passivity and accept responsibility as a father who is on the road?

First, know this: your work matters. We often overlook the spiritual value of hard work, but we are called to provide for our families, to make a positive contribution to the world, to honor God by doing our jobs well. Just don't allow work to matter too much. When your job consistently limits your investment with your children, it might be time to recalibrate.

Proverbs 15:22 says, *"Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisors they succeed."* With that in mind, I hope you will consider this post more of a digital roundtable on this topic.

These are ideas I've had. I've tried some of them. I've failed to try some of them. Some of you have traveled with greater

regularity, and you will have even better ideas. I would love to read your thoughts in the comments below.

Seven ideas for fathers who travel...

1. **Prioritize focused time with your kid(s).** Wise men proactively organize their schedules around what is most important. They fight the temptation to live under the “tyranny of the urgent,” refusing to allow pressing matters to crowd out the most important things. So, prioritize an hour with your kids before or after a trip. Shoot some hoops or take your kid(s) to breakfast on days before you leave town.
2. **Manage the transitions well.** For some, this is difficult. My natural tendency is to procrastinate with making my travel plans, but I’ve found that it is critical to plan and organize my departure and return so that things are not crazy and stressful (for me or for my family). When these times are frantic, it multiplies the impact of being gone.
3. **Write a note to be opened while you are gone.** I know, I know. Some of you don’t think you are a “writer,” but it doesn’t have to be that hard. Think of one thing that your kid does well, and let him or her know how proud you are. Think of the unique way that God has made your child. Is your kid thoughtful or hilarious or competitive or caring? Highlight one attribute you see in them. Say I love you. Don’t be afraid to share your heart. Let them know you are happy that God put them in your life.
4. **Find an app or internet game to play.** With so many apps and games available, find one that you can play. My 10 year old and I played Words with Friends for a few weeks. He could take his turn after school, and I could take my turn at night so that it was his turn again the next day. I’m guessing there are other apps that would allow for these easy touch points to stay connected.

5. **Facetime, skype or call.** This seems easy, but I've found it more difficult than I thought. When my kids are available to talk during the afternoon, I'm usually pounding away at work or in meetings. When I'm available to talk during the evening, my kids are usually in the middle of the dinner, bath, bedtime routine. If it's too late, I can hardly get them to answer two questions. I tend to get better responses if I can sneak in a call before dinner time.
6. **Record a video reading your child's favorite book.** If your child is small, it's hard to beat reading books at bedtime. With phones, Ipads and computers having built-in video devices, it's never been easier to record a video. Take five minutes one evening before you leave and record a video of yourself reading his or her favorite book. Your spouse can play it for your child while you are out of town.
7. **Guard your weekends.** When you are regularly on the road, you need to especially guard your calendar on the days when you are home. As much as possible, try not to let loose ends linger around on your projects so that they demand your attention later. Discipline yourself to work hard on the road so that you can be fully present when you are home. Don't just be home; be engaged at home.

It can be difficult to balance family and work when you are on the road. It will require intentionality. Hopefully, something here got you thinking about your role as a traveling father. Maybe it sparked an idea for you. I'd love to read your thoughts.

Any ideas you would share with us? What has worked well for you? What do you find difficult? How do you manage to balance family with life on the road?

Share your ideas in the comment section below.

Jeff Lawrence is founder and lead pastor of Redemption Church

in Edmond, OK. Lawrence has been married for 18 years and is dad to three young sons and a little girl.

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