

Family Togetherness Week of Prayer
September 3 - 9, 2023

2023 Resource Book

KEYS TO HEALTHY MINDS

Flourishing Families

Adventist Family Ministries

A Week Focused on Positive Mental Health for Your Family

“What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4:9, ESV

The COVID-19 pandemic was a traumatic experience for the entire world. Many individuals, couples, and families had already been experiencing a level of distress, while trying to hold it together physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Within this context, the apostle Paul emphatically urges: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). Paul is writing from a prison cell and clearly understands that in every life trying times will interrupt the normal flow of things. Yet, he knew there was no situation beyond God’s help.

In a world filled with overwhelming anxiety, depression, and emotional unrest, Paul offers the believers an answer. The peace of God. The same offer of peace is available to us today. This is no ordinary peace. Paul says: “and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). There is a place for scientific and psychological interventions. However, God’s peace goes beyond human intervention. It is the kind of peace that sustains during times of hardship.

If we practice a healthy thought life “whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely...meditate on these things...and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:8, 9); He will walk with you, talk with you, and comfort you during challenging times. Your circumstances may not change, although He is able. But God will help transform your approach to trials.

One thing we know for sure, the founders of modern psychology did not invent this kind of peace. This is not positive psychology, or new age thinking. This intervention is straight from the Word of God. This kind of peace resides in those who believe in what Paul shares in Philippians 4:4-9. For when we pray and practice the mental disciplines of rejoicing, praying, meditating, gratitude, and thinking right thoughts, we can stave off anxiety, depression, and other emotional anguish, which can help us foster good mental health.

Maintaining good mental health is vital for everyone. When fostered within a family, it can bring significant benefits: better communication, understanding, empathy, less conflict, higher self-esteem, and resilience among family members. Good mental health goes together with good physical health. When families prioritize good mental health, they tend to also prioritize good habits like adequate sleep, regular exercise, and a healthy diet. Parents or guardians in the home who care for their mental health are good examples for their children.

Karen Holford—the principal contributor of this year’s *Family Togetherness Week of Prayer* resource—will share how we can flourish as individuals and families. We hope this will be the experience of each of you as you allow God’s peace, joy, hope, and healing to abide in your hearts.

Maranatha,

Adventist Family Ministries
Willie and Elaine Oliver, Directors
Seventh-day Adventist
Church World Headquarters

A note from the
Principal Contributor
Karen Holford

This year the focus of the week is developing positive mental health in our families. We will do this by choosing carefully what we think about, and by focusing together on the positive, healthy emotions of gratitude, wonder, joy, kindness, peace, and hope. These ideas are not new! Paul described how he used these positive emotions to help him flourish, even in a Roman prison. Jesus also taught His followers to be grateful, to experience wonder at creation, to enjoy life, to be kind, to experience peace, and to have hope. Jesus came to give us a more abundant life (John 10:10), and choosing positive emotions is an important way to have the amazing abundance of His love and joy.

Karen Holford is the Family, Children’s, and Women’s Ministry Director for the Trans-European Division. She has a professional background in occupational therapy and master’s degrees in psychology, Family Therapy and Christian Leadership. She is married to Pastor Bernie Holford, and they live in England. They have three adult children and three grandchildren. She loves to write, walk in English forests, and share God’s love.

Family Worship

What? Why? How?

Why Family Worship?

- It teaches our children and families to worship God
- Places God at the center of our homes
- Bonds our families together
- Protects our children and families
- Establishes spiritual values

Family Worship **is**:

- Interactive
- Shared leadership
- Brief and engaging

Family Worship **is not**:

- A lecture, sermon, or coercive activity
- Time for discipline or punishment
- Entertainment

Worship is a time when we give adoration and praise to God. With reverence, humility, and gratitude, we make our requests to him. In the Old Testament, animals were sacrificed on the altars. Today, we need only a sacrifice of time and self. When we add the word family to worship, we come together to worship God as a family. Parents especially get an opportunity to disciple their children and teach them how to worship God. Together, we take the time to express honor and respect to God and acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior of our lives and our home. This experience bonds us to one another and draws us closer to God.

Every family can decide how their family worship time looks and what tools they will include. It may consist of reading the bible, singing a song, and praying together as a family. But there are many ways to have family worship as many as there are families. Every family is unique, so you can custom build your family altar just for your family. The only thing that remains the same is that we should turn our focus toward God, the Creator and Sustainer of humankind.

“In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before the fast is broken, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and...when evening comes, to gather once more before Him and thank Him for the blessings of the day past.”

Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 520

“There is no reason why [family worship] should not be the most interesting and enjoyable exercise of the home life, and God is dishonored when it is made dry and irksome. Let the seasons of family worship be short and spirited.”

Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 521

With Gods help CHOOSE for your family

God created us in His own image (Genesis 1:27). This means that the variety of emotions and feelings we were given are also a part of His creation.

This week you and your family are called to CHOOSE your own positive mental health. You are invited to revisit several Bible experiences where you can learn with God’s guidance to CHOOSE to live with healthy minds.

The body we were given is a big responsibility for each of us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Our minds are a key part of our lives. CHOOSE to take steps to live to the fullest, even when times are difficult. Jesus will always be there with you.

How to Use this Resource

PARTS OF A DAILY KEY

01 Bible Verse

A Bible verse with a simple, creative activity to help you memorize it and experience it in a practical way

02 Introduction

An introduction to the theme of the day and why it is good for us

03 Devotional

A short devotional story designed for the whole family

04 Prayer

Pray together-where everyone can share their heart's desire.

05 Activities

Several simple activities to help you practice the positive emotions in your family life.

The original name of this material is Flourish! conceived by the Trans-European Division. If you enjoy the Flourish! activities shared during this week, you can find posters with more ideas and journaling pages. There is also a tree poster for children. They can stick green leaves on the tree whenever they choose to do a flourishing activity to make the tree flourish! Visit: <https://ted.adventist.org/family/flourish/>