

FAMILY

RHYTHM CHECK UP

Time. It's moving quickly, isn't it? It's limited, and yet, we'll never have *more* time than we do right now. For families, time is a valuable, often endangered resource. So how do we make the most of it? How do we create a healthy family rhythm?

When you create a rhythm, you establish priorities. A priority is simply a pre-decision about your time. Whether you're aware of it or not, your family already has its own rhythm. Our goal is to help you work toward healthy, sustainable, and enjoyable patterns that create opportunities for fun, work, rest, and plenty of life-building conversations.

Creating a healthy rhythm for your family takes discipline, planning, and often, creativity. And just when you think you've got your family's schedule all mapped out ... life happens. Don't worry—nobody has it all figured out!

Below are a few questions that will help you assess your family's current rhythm. It may be helpful to bribe your tribe with post-dinner dessert to discuss these questions together. You, your kids, or your spouse may be feeling a tension that has gone unnoticed.

FOR YOU ...

- What's your favorite part of each day? What makes it most enjoyable?
- What's your *least* favorite part of each day? What makes it such a challenge?
- If you had 30 more minutes in each day to do whatever you wanted, how would you spend them?
- Is there a recurring activity or event that you dread consistently?
- Are there consistent times or seasons that you feel lonely, anxious, or overwhelmed?
- If you could delegate one task or chore a week, which would it be?
- Is there a relationship you wish you could spend more time contributing to? What about less time?
- How often are you investing in your spiritual, physical, and personal growth?

FOR THE FAMILY ...

- What is something that we used to do as a family that you wish we still did?
- What is something we used to do as a family that you're glad we don't do anymore?
- I wish our family spent more time _____ and less time _____.
- What is your favorite recent memory with our family?
- If you could change one thing about our family's schedule, what would it be?

FOR OTHERS ...

- How often are you able to volunteer or serve?
- Is there a volunteer opportunity you'd like to devote more time to, but can't? What's stopping you?
- When was the last time our family spent time serving together?

Now that your family has had an opportunity to discuss their responses, you may be wondering, "What now?" That's a great question! In fact, simply talking about your rhythm isn't enough. Here are a few suggestions on how to troubleshoot common obstacles in pursuing a healthy family rhythm:

Establish a family calendar. Whether you choose a digital platform that everyone can access remotely, or a tangible calendar centrally-located inside your home, seeing the "bigger picture" gives context and understanding to what's happening with your family as a unit. Then, choose one night a week—maybe Sunday night—to spend 10-15 minutes as a family discussing what's happening in the coming days. This is a great time to voice thoughts about obligations or appointments that may fall outside a family's normal rhythm.

Create mandatory moments. *Mandatory* isn't everyone's favorite word, but the idea is necessary to establishing a healthy family rhythm. There should be at least a couple of touchpoints each week when your family is in the same space spending quality time doing the same thing.

Pick your priorities. Making an intentional effort to choose which events your family places importance on clarifies expectations and informs decision-making. Inherent in this process is the idea that you can't do all things and be at all places. Maybe it's nightly meals. Maybe it's a weekly religious experience. Maybe it's family game night. Establish a routine that prioritizes the activities where your family connects best.

There are plenty of ways to establish a healthy family rhythm in your home. Start with intentionality and follow up with consistency.