

Conversation Starters

- What is your preferred means of communication (in person, writing, phone/text, etc)?
- How often do you communicate with the people closest to you?

Discuss

Relationships can be complex. Clear and direct communication can make them simpler. This is especially important when it comes to our family and loved ones. The Bible gives some more direction on how we should interact. To start, communication with our family and the people closest to us should always be loving. Life can get really busy and we can forget to communicate our love, either directly through words or indirectly with our actions.

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other." (John 13:34 NLT)

- Does your saying or doing reflect your love for your family or loved ones?
- When was the last time you communicated your love?
- When was the last time love was communicated to you?

The Bible also instructs us to be encouraging in our communication. Every one of us needs encouragement; we need to be built up. This includes verbal compliments and kind words and praise. Our words should never be made to tear another person down, and certainly not our loved ones.

"So encourage each other and build each other up..." (1 Thessalonians 5:11a)

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another..." (Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT)

- Do you plan your days and weeks regularly?
- What tends to compete with family time?
- Are you choosing family over other things? Or choosing other things over family?

The world around us continues to get busier and busier. It's no different within our family. We must be intentional in our communication. Distractions are all around us – other people, cell phones, etc. A healthy family will make time to communicate with each other and not let it be left to itself. Adults need to take the lead.

- Do you know what challenges your loved ones (kids, spouse, friends) have?
- Do you know what big questions are being wrestled with?
- Have you ever had an intentional time to get together to really talk, not just co-exist?

Next Steps

Communication is an important aspect of any relationship. The Bible teaches us to be loving and encourage. We have to be intentional if we want to grow in this area. Below are some ideas for how you can be more intentional in how you can make time for communication:

1. Dinner Time
2. Driving Time
3. Room Time
4. Regular Email/Text
5. "Starbucks Time" (or a special place and time set aside for 1-on-1 longer conversations)
6. Big Talk Time (for major topics in life)

Are there any other ways you can foster more communication with loved ones?

Further Reflection

See John 13:34; 1 Thess. 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25; Proverbs 18:21; 10:11; 12:18; 15:1,4; 16:24; Ephesians 4:29.

Pray

God, thank you for the wisdom you give us in how to communicate with each other, especially our family and the people closest to us. Help us to choose our words wisely - to be loving and encouraging - and to be intentional about actually communicating them.