

Let's talk about *Prayer*



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LET'S TALK ABOUT PRAYER

EMPOWERING MOM'S TO PRAY

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Let's Talk: Empowering Mom's To Pray by Julie Sanders and Heather R. Riggleman

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con·ver·sa·tion

noun \,kän-vər-'sā-shən\

:an informal talk involving two people or a small group of people: the act of talking in an informal way

Introduction

Do you ever find yourself tempted to eavesdrop on words shared between friends? This is your invitation to lean in close and listen to the conversation that flows when one *thirty-something* mom says to a *forty-something* mom, “Let’s talk about prayer.” *Why*, might you ask, because maybe, *just maybe* your prayer life might be nonexistent, or perhaps your prayer life is more like snippets of “Dear God, so help me...” or perhaps you’re in a newer crowd of “What is this prayer thing and why do so many women rely on it?” I used to be a part of the latter crowd. In any case, this little conversation in the form of a book is what Julie and I decided to serve up one afternoon.

You see I (Heather) am much like the character Allyson in the movie *Moms Night Out*. A frazzled, overtired, word lover with a blog in my tiny corner of the world. I’m living the Nebraskan, “Good Life” as a woman who’s married to her high school sweetheart, with a degree in Criminal Justice (comes in *SO* handy with the kids) and my three, loud, wild, and boisterous kids. Most days I try not to compare my insides with someone else’s outsides, other mom’s seem to have it together, wearing *anything* but yoga pants in public, slim figure, soft spoken, their kids well behaved. My life? Not so much.

More often than not, I feel *stress paralyzed* and wonder if my prayers mean *anything* as I hold on to every bit of sanity. And that’s because I’m busy with kids who have different needs, Cheyenne is fifteen and has Asperger’s with a sensory processing disorder, Elijah is eight and has severe ADHD with OCD tendencies and sensory issues. Then there is Victoria Grace who is

five; she's the very reason why James Dobson wrote *The Strong Willed Child*. We had *no* idea when we named her that she would need a lot of grace in parenting her.

To say in the least, when I first met Julie, she seemed so....calm, peaceful—stable. It was like the storm of insanity blew itself out into a sunny pastures. When I think of anyone to ask for advice or expertise, it's her!

JS: And when I (Julie) met Heather, I loved her passion for Christ and vision for impacting others with the hope she has found. She has the boldness of a woman who is totally confident Jesus is the answer to life's problems.

I grew up in a fast-paced suburb of Washington, DC with friends from important families. My own family had generations of emptiness, but no earthly influence. God's truth changed our lives and began a new legacy. "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more," (Romans 5:20-NKJV). When I moved away to a Christian college in the cornfields, my passion for God's truth grew as I received mentoring and a degree in Education. I also found a passion for helping people find God's peace for everyday life and my mountain man husband Jeff.

Together, we've tested God's peace in a range of ministry roles and settings. We're blessed to minister together at home and around the world, where we love hearing people of different languages call out to the true God in their heart language. Our two kids, JoHanna and Jacob, are creative word lovers like me and adventurers like their dad. They're just now beginning to leave home, and I'm on my knees in new ways.

A shared passion for prayer brought the two of us together; through our blogs, conversations with other friends and strangers, we've been asked hundreds of questions about prayer. Though we have different backgrounds and different lives, we both have deep insights

about praying, family, husbands, kids, and life. In this conversation about prayer, we will answer five key questions moms are asking:

- How do we **tap into the power of prayer** when life works against us?
- How should I **order my life** so I can pray?
- How do I **tackle praying** about so many things?
- How do I **find the right words** to pray?
- How do I **help my family** by praying?
- **Tools** out of the conversation
- Join the conversation: The 7 Day Prayer Challenge with Devotions

Are these questions you've found yourself asking? Would you like to know how to find the energy to pray and how to cultivate a prayerful life out of chaos? Would you like help for managing the mountain of prayer needs and for finding the right words to pray with confidence? Would you like to know your prayers will impact your family? Would you like to have more than just a thread of sanity when it comes time to pray? Then we invite you to jump into our conversation about having chatting with God himself. He invited us when He said, "Call to me and I will answer you," ([Jeremiah 33:3a](#)). Let's Talk about Prayer!

How do we tap into the power of prayer when life works against us?
~RECOGNIZE

“Satan had made it his aim to distract you from who you really are and what the purpose of your life really is. It is his focused objective to lure you out of the path of strength, life, and authority and into a course of intentional destruction.”

— Lisa Bevere, *Girls with Swords: Why Women Need to Fight Spiritual Battles*ⁱ

JS: Sometimes life feels like it works against us, because our enemy is always at on the prowl, pouncing when we least expect it. If he can defeat a mom, he has a good chance at the whole family and he knows it. Although Satan doesn't know our thoughts he watches, waiting for just the right moment to interfere. He looks for our weaknesses and targets our energy. That's why you must, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour,” ([1 Peter 5:8 - ESV](#)). Every woman can be sure her enemy works to keep her standing on her own, rather than kneeling in prayer. What distracts you most from getting to prayer and from being in prayer?

HR: I've seen it time and again in my own life. One moment I'm in control of my emotions, taking care of my kids, and then, Bam—something unexpected happens like bills, appointments, schedules, and my world is spinning out of control. Feeling frazzled and out of control, I try to invite God in, but my heart hopscotches to next thing and lands on stress. Especially when the kids seem wild or chaos abounds, I feel like I don't have time or a chance to

stop and pray. Other times I'm distracted. Here's how my prayer life went this morning, I kid you not,

"Father, thank you for the cool rain today."

I need to get the laundry done today. ALL. OF. IT. I can't stand the idea of 8,000 loads just sitting in baskets.

"Lord, I need wisdom to parent Cheyenne, I'm so afraid of losing her."

Does she have practice after school today, I wonder if I need to pick her up before work. WORK...ugh. I don't want to go to work. It's such a waste of my time.

"God your ways aren't our ways, help us to dig out from under all this debt."

I wonder if Chris can build us an entertainment stand instead of buying one...

I won't bore you with my thoughts about what to make for supper or how the grass in the front yard is looking this year.

JS: It comforts me to know God is fully aware of all my concerns, big and small, from supper tonight to debt to losing our kids. He knows. Still, distractions can keep us from getting to God in prayer and from giving him our burdens. They can create the "noise" in life that makes it hard to get quiet with God himself, to listen to him, and to be renewed by God. A mom with a full heart needs to unload on the Lord, but our burdens get in the way of accessing help and comfort from the only one who can give it. How do all of the distractions make you feel about prayer in general?

HR: SIGH. It's so sad. I keep falling for the oldest trick in the book. *Distractions*. This morning, as I prayed, I realized this happens more often than I'd like. I get caught up in other things that are either not productive or have no value or purpose at all; I wander off somewhere else and then find myself stuck and unmotivated. It seems to be an endless cycle for me. I keep

going around the same mountain without any success. I must tell you, that it gets frustrating and eventually I want to give up. But don't! I haven't given up, and because I know how much of a pray slacker I can be, I thought we could join ranks and encourage each other to keep going, keep trying.

JS: If we're honest, we all have the potential to be "prayer slackers!" Having friends who value prayer and talk about prayer helps me resist the urge to be a slacker. The more I know God and the more I know myself, the more determined I am that I need to pray.

One of my greatest distractions to prayer is just plain old busyness. The busier I become with the things of life, the more I need to pray. But the busier I am, the less likely I am to pray. I slip into relying on myself to accomplish my responsibilities. I'm easily deceived into thinking I can successfully navigate the gauntlet of things to do all by myself, but Jesus made it clear that apart from him, I can do nothing, ([John 15:5](#)). When Julie is busy, Julie needs to pray.

HR: Jules—I so need to remember [John 15:3](#). The busier I get, the less I think I have time for prayer. Unfortunately, we're all a little distracted because of the pitfall of busyness. We have more than a million titles to wear on a daily basis. Between being mom, wife, daughter, sister, friend, co-worker, employee, chef, bottle washer, homework helper, laundry folder, deadline greeter; we're more than just distracted. We're busy. We're trying to *invent* the word "balance" in a world that doesn't use it as a definition in living life. Often when I feel busy, I am reminded of what busy stands for: **Being Under Satan's Yolk**.

And it's exactly where the enemy wants us in his grasp: **Too busy, too distracted to pray**. When we're distracted, we lose our focus on God. We forget to move with him and instead we run an entirely different direction than where he wants us to go. And what happens is a train

wreck we didn't see coming. As we survey the damage, we wonder how we got here. How can we prevent that?

JS: Train wrecks are never good! When I let my schedule or my busyness become an idol, I lose my focus on God and godly things. Whether it's my marriage, my housekeeping, my children, my service, my dreams, my health, or my _____ (you fill in the blank), I know God tells me I have all I need to be the woman He calls me to be. I lean hard on [2 Peter 1:3](#) that says, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness," (ESV). When I look outside of God's sufficiency, I'm easily ruled BY distractions, instead of ruling OVER distractions.

HR: So you're saying that if we say *yes* to too many things like room mom, car pool, another work project—busyness doesn't just become our yolk but it becomes our idol? It's hard to look at it that way, especially when my desire is to nurture, be involved to raise good kids, or being a loving wife. It seems to be a new challenge for women these days. What do you think?

JS: This isn't a new challenge for women today, though we might feel like it is. But I think distraction might be more easily accessed than ever. Technology alone has made it much more convenient for the enemy to use the tool of distraction. If we're going to be women of prayer, we have to think ahead about how to tap into the power of prayer when life throws distractions and busyness against us. Women today have all we need to be women of prayer.

HR: What about God? I often wonder if he really cares what I have to say. Does it really matter to him if I pray about getting laundry done or that Tori is throwing tantrums?

I often think I've travel around this mountain one too many times and God doesn't want to hear what I have to say and he doesn't have the time to speak to someone like me.

This is where I gently nudge you before tossing a pillow at you. ☺

JS: When you toss a pillow at me, I know you want my attention! What do you say to the mom who is *so* distracted today that she can't keep her mind and heart turned in the direction of prayer?

HR: I would say, God loves you and needs to hear from you. He wants to hear your prayers. He cares too. He isn't too busy for you, he loves you just like he does everyone else and he's waiting. Ha, I answered my own question. It reminds me of Matthew 6:26 when we are reminded to look at the sparrows of the air. If God knows and cares about something of insignificance—then shouldn't we remember just how valuable we are in his eyes? Shouldn't we realize just how precious and valuable we are in God's eyes—including our worries, dreams, and thoughts?

When we pray, we give him permission to move in our lives. We get the chance to partner with God to kill anxiety, create peace, close doors, open windows, heal wounds, and instill character in our children.

JS: And that's exactly what prayer does and why we are desperate for more of it in our lives. Every mom needs God to move in her life, to be there in the tough, grinding moments of the everyday and to be there to rejoice in our moments of joy. I needed it when I brought our babies home from the hospital, when I tried to teach them "No," when they went off to school, when they made friends I didn't know, when they made their own decisions about faith, and now as they choose their own paths for their future. Moms are desperate for God's direction and movement in our lives. We need divine action to calm our stress, cover us with his peace, provide for our needs, heal pain in our families, and grab hold of our kids' hearts. We can't be the moms we want to be without the power of prayer.

HR: He is an awesome God, and he is always there to pick us up, dust us off, clean up our wounds, and set us on our feet again—I love that. And he just a breath away, in my heart and in his Word. Digging into the Bible is the last thing on our minds because we could be doing *something*, instead of sitting, soaking, and listening.

JS: We need God's truth as a lamp to our feet and a light to our often-hard-to-see path ([Psalm 119:1](#)). I find that God's word inspires me to respond to him in prayer, and prayer often urges me back to his word. The two go hand in hand. God's word is living and active ([Hebrews 4:12](#)) and prayer is comforting and clarifying ([Hebrews 4:16](#)).

I fight that same urge to *do something* when there's a need or a heavy distraction, but prayer is the greatest work and God's word holds the answers for life. Together, his word and prayer provide a way to have a conversation with God based on truth that doesn't change and that will endure any mama-trauma I face. Just saying that gives me a great sense of confidence and peace.

HR: I love that equation. It makes it easy to remember: His Word + Prayer =

Conversations with God. ☺ I know the weight of distractions will hold us down, keep us from focusing on our priorities, and keep us from God. But that can change, and it's going to change as we take this journey together to focus our hearts on God. Let's do it!

How should I order my life so I can pray? ~ TIME

Does your mind sound like mine in the mornings?

“6:30, oh, gosh, gotta get up and get the kids outta bed. This bed feels so good, just another five minutes of sleep. I should probably wash the sheets today and maybe do some laundry. Okay time to get up. Maybe in five more minutes...ZZZ.”

Sometimes I think praying is a lot like getting ready to go to the gym. In order for me to get my sleep loving self outta bed, I have to prep, prep, and practice. Sometimes I even enlist my hubby to push me out of bed to go, but I can't always rely on him. So the age old question remains, how does one pray? Or better yet, how does one create a prayer life? I opted to grab a caramel latte and ask Jules. ☺

HR: How do I order my prayer life so I can pray?

JS: Asking this question is the first step to developing a strong prayer life. Ask the Lord, first of all, but also ask others who model a strong prayer life. If we don't stop to intentionally figure out this question of cultivating prayer habits, chaos will just take over. If prayer is to be high on our list of what we value, we have to **order** life to make room for it.

There will never come a time when our laundry baskets are empty, our fridge is full (minus moldy leftovers), dinner is made, children are educated, the husband is content, accounts are paid in full, and our health is at its best. Something always waits to be done. To cultivate a strong prayer life, we have to say no to something of lesser importance. We have to say yes to a plan that provides for habits of prayer.

HR: Creating a prayer life takes preparation and dedication. It takes being intentional with your time. Just like when we gear up for the school year with lists, supplies, preparation, and organization, our prayer life is the same way...or getting ready for the gym for that matter. Ugh, the gym! ☺

JS: Prayer habits won't become part of our lives unless we change the way we use our time. A mom who longs to be a praying mom will need to keep evaluating this, because the demands on our time change with the seasons of life. Keep an adaptable attitude, be realistic about your time, and commit to a plan that's realistic for where you are in life.

HR: I don't know what time works best for you, but I've learned as a mom to do my exercise and Bible time in the morning, because life happens between 7:00 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. Begin applying the steps below to carve out and cultivate your prayer life. And if you aren't a morning person or have a baby, you can adapt this schedule to what works for you.

Step 1. Prepare the Night Before

- Gather the following:
- Bible
- Pen
- Journal
- Notepad & Planner
- Devotional (if you're using one)
- Water bottle & Coffee Cup
- Worship Music

Prep your coffee pot and lay out your clothes if necessary. Find a place where you can get up early and not wake up your brood.

JS: Remember to grab an extra note pad or your planner. This way as you begin praying and your to-do list begins running in your mind, you can jot down your notes, clear your head and get back to praying.

Tip #1.

Mama, if getting up early isn't an option because you're still getting up at all hours of the night, consider nap time. And if that still isn't an option and you have little ones at home, try tablet time for the kids while you pray.

- Once you designate time to pray, explain to your kids what you're trying to accomplish. Next, turn on a favorite movie or allow them to play a special app. Offer your kids a reward if they do their best not to interrupt you. Then take a deep breath because chances are, they will interrupt.

Step 2. Get OUT of Bed.

That's it! That's all you have to do. Just get out of bed. Tell yourself even after you get out of bed that you can go back when you're done. This step is vital. Even if you fail to make it to your Bible, you can begin developing the habit of getting out of bed early. Your body will begin to adjust and soon you'll be able to wake up early without a problem. I've been waking up early for years. I love how accomplished I feel, on top of knowing I've had a chance to surrender my day to God. It prepares me to meet the day's challenges, to tackle parenting, and work. What I love most is my children waking to Mommy on her knees with her Bible. I can greet them with a smile and what I've prayed over them.

STEP 3. Create a Routine

- M
My time consists of waking up first.
- W
Worship and listening.
- R
Reading my Bible & Devotional
- P
Praying as I journal.

Worship

After I get out of bed and make it to my quiet place, I turn on my favorite worship music that tunes me into the heart of God, either on my phone or off of my YouTube playlist.

- Hosanna – Hillsong United
- The Stand – Hillsong United
- 10,000 Reasons – Matt Redman
- Come thou Fount – Mumford and Sons
- Give me Faith – Elevation Worship
- Be Still – The Fray
- You Revive Me – Christy Nockels

I asked Julie what some of her favorites are. She admits that her list is ever-changing, but there are certain songs that have earned a lasting place in her heart and on her play list. These are morning worship songs for her.

- Before the Day – Newsong
- Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing – Jars of Clay
- Draw Me Nearer – Meredith Andrews

- Oceans Will Part – Hillsong United
- My Hope is in You – Aaron Shust
- Blessings - Laura Story
- There is a God – LeeAnn Womack
- Good Morning – Mandisa

These songs remind us that life isn't about me as Heather or as Julie. It's about him and everything we do, from washing bottles to folding soccer uniforms, it is for Jesus. It reminds us that the whole purpose of our existence is to bring God glory and honor; and brings us back to the place where we first fell in love with Christ. And when the day gets rough, our souls run back to that moment spent in worship, reminding us just how BIG God is. In these moments when we don't feel like we're enough or what we do doesn't matter—those precious moments in worship flood our minds as God fills us with truth—what we do matters!

What about Bible Studies and Devotions?

JS: Heather and I both know what life can be like without God's truth. When we call out to God in prayer, he often provides help through his Word. Prayer goes hand in hand as we dive into the truth of the Bible. One leads you to the other. As I pray, God stirs my heart to hunger for his principles, teachings, and love; I hear him speak to me through Scripture. As I spend time studying or meditating on his truth, it compels my soul to respond to him in prayer.

When I reflect over my walk with God and I can relate my times of greatest understanding, strength, obedience, and peace to consistent time in the Bible. Spiritual growth depends on feeding on God's word. Even when time and energy are short, I can modify my expectations and plans to maintain regular time with the Lord, listening to him in his Word and communicating with him in prayer. Bible study is the natural partner to prayer.

HR: There were days when I wasn't sure how to dig into God's Word or what to read in the Bible, so I began going to a local women's Bible study. I love how studies help us focus on one subject as it is unpacked for our hearts to digest.

JS: Studying with a group can give us direction, encouragement, and accountability so that we get into God's word, stay in it, and apply it to the things of life.

HR: When you and I first saw those two pink lines confirming we were going to become mothers, we consumed every article and book we could find. We wanted to know everything so we could be prepared for the new journey before us. Devotions are the same way. They prepare our hearts for the things God wants to lead us through and they teach us about themes that are occurring in our lives. When I first committed my life to Christ, I didn't understand devotions, Bible studies, and a daily prayer life is what God uses to talk to us, to guide us, and to reveal how much he loves us. I honestly thought it was just another thing good Christian girls *do* until I

began reading devotional books which incorporated journaling and prayer. It revealed a God I didn't know, it taught me not only about his ways, but his heart for me and just how much he loves me. It moved me so much that I began to write my own devotions for the everyday trenches of motherhood.

If you feel like you aren't hearing from God—this is a great place to start! I recommend my book, [*Mama Needs a Time Out: Daily Getaways for The Mom's Soul*](#). It leads you through the trenches of motherhood while the stories are peppered with who God is and teaches you how to pray. It gives you a time out and a moment or two with God.

Julie's book [*Expectant*](#), captures the realities of real-life pregnancy and motherhood without crushing the wonder of it all. Filled with insight and wisdom, this book will turn nine months of growing bigger into nine months of going deeper with God, preparing you to be the godly mother you really want to be. It will release in November of 2014.

But you don't have to read those, check out a book store and try not be overwhelmed with the choices out there, a girl could sit at Barnes & Noble all day with her latte just trying to choose *one*. Generally I go with something that speaks to the "issue" I'm having at the moment.

JS: Since there are so many options available for Bible study, it helps to have some basic guidelines to sort through the choices. These are the basic questions I ask when I'm considering a study or devotional tool.

- Does the content focus on God's truth or the opinions of people?
- Does the resource agree with the truth of God's word or add to it?
- Does the study/guide provide application of truth for life?
- Does the tool provide a manageable amount of study?
- Does the personal life of the author/contributor match the message of the tool?

HR: Bible study guides help dust off the Word of God and shed new light on pages that once seemed musty and dull. Other times I join our women's Bible study at church and go through the book chosen by the group. I love being with other women and working through a study of some sort. It provides accountability when I'm getting up to pray and read.

JS: Accountability is a big benefit of studying with a partner or a group. I also find that when I study with other women, I gain so much from their insight into truth, the convictions they experience, and the application they find for life. When I dig into God's truth in a relational setting, I'm more likely to let it filter through my life and produce change where it's needed.

HR: In some seasons of life, it's not easy to find the opportunity to dig into the Word or go to a Bible study group. In those times, it is good to pick a reading plan and read through the Bible.

Reading Plans

Reading plans provide structure, you can pick up where you left off, and it opens your eyes to God's Word as a journey—an amazing love letter. There are dozens of plans to choose from and just as many translations. You can even pick a plan for the whole family to listen to as y'all are going to school or eating breakfast. Sites like [YouVersion](#) and [Bible Gateway](#) offer Bible reading plans that can be heard in audio format or printed out, delivered to your inbox, or received as a text message to smartphones. These plans are great for the months when I know life is going to extra busy.

How do I tackle praying about so many things? ~ DIRECTION

JS: I love the ways women use social media as a tool for prayer. It's easier than ever to keep a small group or study group informed about needs for prayer and reasons for praise. We can stand together in prayer for brothers and sisters in Christ across the world through technology, but there's a downside. Prayer warriors risk feeling overwhelmed by the quantity of information right at their fingertips. The avalanche of details, names, needs, and knowledge has a way of stifling even the most intentional woman of prayer. Temptations to delete a request or turn away from an update sometimes result in guilt over getting under the pile of prayer requests. There is an alternative to declaring prayer bankruptcy and opting for the ostrich approach of sticking in your head in the sand and just praying about your own concerns.

While God bears the burdens of the world, He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and Omnipresent (See [Psalm 121:1-8](#)). We are not meant to compete with the Lord himself to carry the weight of the world. He is all sufficient, while we are desperate for his grace. In other words, he knows, he sees, he is there. Do you ever find yourself wondering where to start to tackle all there is to take to God in prayer?

HR: I feel the same way, I feel overwhelmed with the disasters I see on the news, typhoons, hurricanes, school shootings, and then when I get online there are dozens of prayer requests—it's just too much! And then there are the burdens and needs of our family, our kids, and husbands. Sometimes we don't know where to start praying, our thoughts are a mess, our lives are messier, and our needs are greater still. Often we start praying and it comes out something like this, "God, I'm so sorry, please help me to... God give me, God I'm frustrated,

Lord, I don't know what to do with..." We feel like our prayers are childish nonsense and then we give up all together.

JS: A lot of women give up on prayer, because they just don't feel like they know how to tackle it. And then there's the conviction that comes with telling someone you'll pray for them, only to forget and "fail" in standing with them before the Lord. But I can tell you that women simple plan for prayer are more likely to get on their knees.

HR: I can tell you from personal experience where imbalanced prayer leads. Sensing the carelessness and the one-sidedness of your prayers, you begin feeling guilty about praying. Guilt leads to faintheartedness, and that in turn leads to prayerlessness. At one point I was so fed up with pointless prayer time, I sat back and wondered why I wanted to pray. Was it because it's what good Christian girls do? Or was it because I wanted to a deeper relationship with God?

JS: I think anyone reading this book desires a deeper relationship with God. They must want to figure out the problem of prayer and tap into the power found in communicating with God. It was that desire that prompted you to start asking questions about prayer, Heather. Could you share how God stirred your heart for your family and the simple plan you worked out in answer to that desire?

HR: For months, my soul was dry, thirsty, and restless. It was like my soul knew something was missing but my head didn't know what it was. Then God revealed [Psalm 66:16-20](#), to me. It leaped off the pages of my Bible,

"Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But

truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!”

I realized I needed to get on my knees, open my mouth in praise and prayer because he had heard my prayers, all of them—even the halfhearted ones. I realized I wanted God to move in my life and within my family, it became the driving force. It was within those secret moments of getting on my knees and realizing he is listening, and waiting for me to ask him to move when my prayer life started grow. A passion to meet with God became seeds planted in my heart, allowing my roots to grow deep into the rich soil talking with God.

I found myself wanting to offer more heartfelt prayers, the kind of prayers where I knew without a doubt God was moving in our lives. I wanted prayers so rich and deep where God knew every crevice of my heart. I wanted to know that when I moved my lips God was listening. And because I am so A.D.D. at times, I knew I needed to figure out how to structure my prayer time which is how I learned to “talk” to God.

I'm going to offer you a pattern to follow. It's not the only pattern or the perfect pattern, but it's a good pattern that made learning how to pray easier—like having a conversation with God. In turn, it deepened my relationship with him and because I journaled using this pattern, I could go back and add little things to my pages like how God answered a prayer and when.

The more I thought about the pattern, the more I thought about how ANYONE could use this to begin to journal or simply model spoken prayers and began teaching it to my teenage daughter and shared it with Jules—who loves it too!

All you have to remember is praying is like having a conversation—like chatting with God, so remember the phrase “Let’s **T.A.L.K.**” It will prompt you to remember what the acrostic stands for. An acrostic whose letters stand for *Thanksgiving, Acknowledgement, Lifting up others, and Kneeling your heart humbly before God.*

Thanksgiving: sets the tone for prayer time, it reminds us just how awesome God is. It reminds us of whom we are addressing, the fact we have just entered into the throne room, into God’s presence.

Acknowledgement: This reminds us who is in charge and gives us a chance to move the burdens we carry in our hearts to hand over to him. So often we have big burdens, huge mountains of worry and instead of leaving it before God to handle—we pick it right back up, letting it storm our hearts and cloud our minds. Acknowledging God gives us a chance to surrender, to confess our frustrations and sins—to ask for help. When we confess our sins, God is able to open our eyes to healing and leads us from feelings of being trapped to being free.

Lifting Up Others: Now we have a chance to really focus on our mommy hearts as we ask Jesus to guide how we parent. It gives us a moment to reflect on their needs and ask God to move in their lives, to help with sassiness, fussiness, the eyeball rolling, or lack of self-control. It gives us a chance to pray for their future, who they are going to become, what character we long to see installed within their hearts, or to pray for their future spouse.

Kneeling: Kneeling puts the image of us getting on our knees. It reminds us to humbly come before God with our prayers, asking not only for him to answer our prayers but to take it

one step further, to ask for his will to be done. Often times, God answers prayers his way, which may not be the way we wanted but it definitely produces great character and deeper trust in him.

JS: I love that pattern, Heather, and I love it that you taught it to your daughter, Cheyenne. I really believe every woman and young woman has a desire to have a conversation with her heavenly Father. When our hearts, lives or schedules are full, we need a simple pattern imbedded in our minds, so we can turn to the Lord with confidence.

My high school history teacher always said, “The hardest part of anything is the start.” Having a place to start with our conversation with God helps us to find the direction we need for tackling the need to pray. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the mountain of information we’re exposed to, by the needs we’re aware of, or the burdens we carry, we can easily engage in the T.A.L.K. pattern to get us on our knees and experience the power of taking it all to God himself.



Let's
T.A.L.K.
Prayer Pattern

T – Thank Him

Thank God for how he has moved in your life today, praise him for the little moments of blessings, thank him for being who he is—*the Creator who loves you.*

A—Acknowledge Him

Acknowledge he has authority to work in your life. Surrender your day, your thoughts, and your moments to him, including moments of weakness, frustrations, and sin.

L—Lift Up Others

Lift up your family's needs, your friends.

K—Kneel Before God

Humbly lay your heart before him as you remember his ways are higher than your ways. Tell God your needs, worries, and dreams; asking for his will to be done as he moves in your life in ways you could

never imagine.

For journal pages and bookmarks with this acrostic, visit: <http://wp.me/P2iEZB-acL>

How do I find the right words to pray? ~ CONFIDENCE

JS: If prayer is new to you, you may wonder how people learn to pray, how they know what words to use, and how they make it sound so spiritual. You may hope we're going to share the secret in this part of our conversation on prayer. We're not. There is no secret, because there are no right words or magic formula. Prayer is a conversation with the God who already knows you and loves you and longs to hear from you and guide you. The best words to use are the words in your heart.

Prayer may be verbal, written, or silent. Sometimes our prayers groans from aches and pains that are too deep for words but God hears that too. Even if your prayers are sobs or sniffles or those awful choking cries, he understands what your heart says. A journal is one of the best tools for expressing your prayers, practicing how to shape your thoughts, and taking time to choose your words. Heather, what do you include in your prayer journal to make it a meaningful tool for your conversations with God?

Keeping a Prayer Journal

HR: Journals bring order, organization and make my prayers more tangible. Each year I crack open a new journal or five star notebook. I transfer my favorite quotes and poems to it, along with unanswered prayers that I'm still seeking God about. I pray daily using **T.A.L.K.** and write out my prayers. Sometimes they are in list form, other times, they are in depth with descriptions and emotions.

I do a lot of confessing and soul searching in my journals. I ask God for help with how I parent my kids and to balance being an author, blogger, speaker, with being a mom. It's a balance easily tipped in the wrong direction. I also ask for help with my temper and to use my words with my kids wisely. I'm sure you have things where you feel like you have it all balanced only to find yourself on the floor, picking up the mess once again.

JS: That's one thing I love about a prayer journal. It's a record for me, because as much as I think I won't forget God's movement, I do. I need a written reminder of God's action in my life and his guidance for me. Since I know I will always battle the balance of life, I desperately need to record what God shows me and how he steers and helps me. What does the journal do for you?

HR: Journaling about these moments is a reminder that God sees me and I'm not alone. It opens my eyes to what triggers certain emotions or tone. It helps me see what my child is struggling with and how to specifically pray for him/her. Julie, do you ever pray using Scripture?

JS: I sure do, and the more God's truths flow through my thoughts and heart, the more likely I am to incorporate scripture into my prayers. It's when my days become scripture-parched that I'm less likely to use God's own words to praise him and lift my needs to him.

How to Pray Using Scripture

When scripture is part of our thinking, scripture will be part of our prayers. First, feed on God's word so it becomes part of the word bank near the surface of your thought life. Do this by:

- Reading God's word
- Memorizing a passage of scripture that moves you or holds a key truth

- Rereading one passage over and over for consecutive days, so it becomes “sticky”
- Write out God’s words on an index card, in a journal, or in a typing app
- Sing scripture
- Meditate on a short passage, where you read, reread, ponder, pray about, and read again
- Once scripture is embedded in your heart and mind as a resource you can access, the Holy Spirit will do most of the work of bringing those words to your mind. You can be intentional about using words from the Bible in your own prayers. Here’s how I do it:
- Address God in one of his names expressing his quality that is on your heart (comfort?)
- Using words from scripture, affirm what you believe and know to be true. For example, “Abba, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to guide my path.” ([Psalm 119:105](#))
- Get personal by using your own name, names of loved ones and specific places, and details of your life interwoven in the scripture, like this: “Would you help JoHanna to know you are her Abba as she leaves Tennessee? I know you can use your word to be a lamp for her feet to follow. Would you shed the light of truth on her path, so she knows what choices to make for her future in education and her dreams of serving you?” ([Psalm 119:105](#))
- Agree with the truths of the Bible by using God’s very words to reinforce what He has said. It might sound like, “I’m calling on You, Lord, because you have said that if I call on You, You will answer me and show me great and mighty things that I don’t know yet. I’m going to thank you in advance for what you’re going to show me as we seek you.” ([Jeremiah 33:3](#))

The very words of God have been preserved for us to know him, to learn of him, and to respond to him. What I love about God’s word and having a relationship with Jesus is knowing

he isn't just sitting around in heaven; instead Jesus is actively advocating on our behalf with God. He brings our prayers to God. Such a powerful thought!

When I use the building blocks of scripture as the cornerstones of my prayers, I find comfort, confidence, and clarity for moments when I'm about to explode with praise or when I'm so heavy hearted I'm speechless.

JS: A prayer journal is one more tool God uses to help me find the right words to lift my heart to him. It doesn't matter if it's a spiral, a binder, a book, a photo album, a tablet, or a computer file, but what matters is taking time to write down God's word and the words of my heart. If I slow down and wait on him, he will give me the words from him word and my word, and those are the "right words."

HR: When we pray, we ask God to fight and move on our behalf. When we journal, it's important to use God's word to reinforce the area of faith we're praying about. Whether we're seeking God for more faith, your son's lack of self-control or finances; find a verse that corresponds with it. When we pray using scripture, we are wielding the mighty sword of the Word.

How do I help my family by praying? ~ PURPOSE

JS: Let's talk about how prayer helps our families. My kids are in the "leaving the nest" stage, and I've found new reasons and ways to pray. Your kids are still at home, dealing with the typical and sometimes not-so-typical problems of growing up. Jeff and I have been married about a quarter of a century (Sounds SO long to say it that way!) and you and Chris have been married 15 years. We both know that it takes more than determination to make a marriage work, much less to make it thrive. Let's talk about prayer and the difference it makes when we put it to work for our family.

Praying Over Our Children & Husband

HR: I would love to lock my kids within the four walls of my home and hide them away from away from the world but that would do more harm than good. While I can't hide my children away from the crazy world outside our front door—I can pray. In fact it's what God reminds us to do, we can be proactive in guarding them as we pray for wisdom, peace, and safety. In fact, this is what Jesus called us to do because he hears our prayers and intercedes on our behalf before God.

With this in mind, I'm reminded we aren't fighting for our children or husband in flesh and blood, [Ephesians 6:10-18](#) reminds us we are fighting:

"Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities

of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

"Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (NLT)

JS: So let's be specific, because I think a lot of women hear, "Pray scripture" and they wonder what that really sounds like. How about sharing some actual passages and the words you use to pray those truths? Below are some examples we both use to pray.

HR: Here are examples from my journal of how I use Scriptures to pray.

Based on [Ephesians 6:18-19](#)

I pray in your name that when my children open their mouths they will boldly and fearlessly proclaim the mystery of the gospel and they will be protected by your armor as they witness for you in this time.

Based on [James 4:17](#)

Father God, I lift my son, Elijah up to you. Let his character grow in righteousness to do what is right at all times. Remind him to do the good he ought to do.

Based on [Proverbs 25:28](#)

Lord God, when my children start to act out of control or impulsively, let them know they are acting as a city whose walls have fallen. Prompt them to control their little hands and feet.

Based on [Joshua 1:9](#)

May Chris be strong and courageous, not afraid; not discouraged, for you—the Lord will be with him wherever he goes (Joshua 1:9). Lord, as he travels with his peers, encourage his spirit to speak truth in the face of white lies, remind him of who he is in you.

JS: And how about your house? I have a friend who wrote Bible verses all over the floor of their home before the wood flooring was put down over it. She loved knowing that God's word was actually "covering" her house physically. How can we cover our homes in prayer?

Covering Your House in Prayer

HR: Sometimes my kids have reoccurring nightmares or naughty little behaviors start popping up at home; I know it's time to *clean house* and pray over our home. This dedicates our home, our things, and our attitudes back to God. It invites his presence into our home as we ask him to dwell with us. I go from room to room, praying over their toys, their beds, their favorite books. Often I pray over my husband's keys, favorite work shirts, and computer.

JS: I love that, because in the process of praying, it also sets our perspective as the woman, the wife, and the mom. We get our heart into the right place, so God can move and work around us and maybe even through us. How do you pray over the things your family owns?

Praying over Your Family's Things.

HR: "Lord, I dedicate this room to you. Let Elijah's room be a place where your presence dwells. I pray that as he slumbers in his bed, you will be watching over him, protecting his mind

as he dreams. I dedicate his toys to you, Lord God. Let his toys be a reminder of how you provide and teach him not to be selfish. I pray over his closet father, thank you for his clothes. As he gets ready each day, turn his thoughts toward how he glorifies you in all that he does—including how he dresses. I invite the Holy Spirit to dwell in this room. I cast out in the name of Jesus any darkness trying to dwell here; I cast out depression, anxiety, doubt, anger, rebelliousness, and ask that your light, your presence dwells here. I ask in the name of Jesus that nothing comes into Elijah's room without your permission! Lord, you are the ruler over heaven and earth, and I proclaim that you are the ruler over this room as well. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

JS: Praying over our husband, our children, our home, and our belongings engages God's protection, power, and purpose in our families. Not only that, but as we pray, we set our hearts on obedience in the direction of God's desires, empowering us to produce fruit that comes from a trusting heart of prayer. Prayerfully describing my heart's intention to shape my life God's way helps me to live out my desire to, "run in the way of *his* commandments," ([Psalm 119:32a](#)). When I pray over the family God has given me, I'm more likely to live the way God commands me.

Celebrating Answers ~ BELIEVE!

So let's just take some time to celebrate how we've seen God answer prayer. Let's order one more cup of coffee (And a cookie, can we get a cookie?) and just give our final minutes pre-resources to testify of some of the ways God has moved in our lives because of prayer. We want to end by dispelling any doubt that the two of us are convinced that prayer matters. We want you to know that it is well worth your time to pick up your Bible, take a journal, grab a friend, pour a cup of coffee, and say, "Let's talk about prayer!"

HR: I've seen God answer prayers in my life. Many have been unexpected, like when my youngest was ten months old. She managed to climb out of her play pen and crawled nearly the entire way up the stairs before falling and breaking her thigh bone. We took her in to the clinic where her leg was x-rayed, revealing the fracture before she was fitted with a soft cast with instructions to keep her still.

I didn't know how to keep an active and stubborn ten-month-old still in order for her bones to begin healing. That night at church, we took brought her with us and the x-rays in tow. Friends saw the x-rays and began to pray over Tori. They prayed for a miracle, for God to heal her bones as if they had never broken. They prayed for Tori to be content and to be still. They prayed for peace for me.

When I went took her in for her two week appointment, the doctor thought it was strange. Tori was putting weight on her leg without fussing so he called for x-rays. When he received them, he thought the lab had mixed up which leg to x-ray only to find out her leg had healed.

As he studied the x-rays and ordered new ones, the conclusion was the same. No broken bones. Tori had been healed. What about you Jules?

JS: I resigned from a teaching job I loved so we could move for my husband's graduate school. After months of praying, working odd jobs, and watching our savings dwindle, I began to wonder if God was listening. We came home after Christmas to a message on our phone. A principal offered me a job in an amazing school, in the grade level I loved, and at more than I made before. He provided above and beyond all we needed!

HR: After praying for two long, hard years, my husband committed his life to following Jesus.

JS: That's an incredible answer to prayer! And I know that so many women need to hear that encouragement. When returning home from Asia, we had no car and little savings, but we prayed that God would provide for us. We received a phone call from a couple at our church in the States, saying that though they didn't know us well, they felt burdened to give us their family car. It left them without a car to fit their whole family, but they said they knew God wanted them to be obedient to give us their car. We were humbled. We were blessed. And in return, God blessed them, and we rejoiced!

HR: When we needed brakes for our van and couldn't afford them, someone paid a mechanic to fix them.

JS: It's so inspiring and humbling when we see God use his people to answer our needs expressed in prayer. Our daughter became seriously ill in her second semester of college, and her grades dropped, despite her efforts to salvage them. In the end, she was under the requirement to

keep her scholarship. We prayed God would provide and show us what to do. Before we could take any action, the college called to tell us that they decided to extend her scholarship!

HR: When we were concerned about our daughter failing school, God opened doors for her to attend a private school, where she blossomed.

Equipping your prayer life ~ RESOURCES

Now that you're ready and equipped to pray over your home, children, and husband; here are some great tools to help you. All are printable and free! Visit www.heatherriggleman.com or www.juliesanders.org and join us for the 7 Day Prayer Challenge.

[Prayer Calendar for your Husband](#)

[Prayer Calendar for your Children](#)

[Scripture Cards to Combat Worry](#)

[20 Power Verses for the Praying Mom](#)

[Let's Talk Bookmark](#)

[Let's Talk Single Journal Page](#)

[4 Square Family Prayer Tool](#)

[31 Days of Praying Scripture for People](#)

ABOUT JULIE SANDERS



God winked when He joined accident-prone Julie with risk-taking Jeff. Together they've parented two kids through serving, reading, and adventuring around the world, which has been the perfect inspiration for prayer. While she now lives where tea is sweet and grits are cheesy, Julie loves to teach God's word to women in her hometown and across the globe. She is also passionate about fighting human trafficking and helping women of all tribes and tongues find God's peace for life.

Julie is a contributor for [The MOM Initiative](#), [The MOB Society](#), and [WomensMinistry.Net](#). She enjoys writing for print and digital resources like *P31Woman*, *Focus on the Family*, *The Message*, *Just Between Us*, and *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Check out Julie's blog home [Come Have a Peace](#) (www.juliesanders.org) and *Marriage Mondays* to find reasons for peace and information about her ministry of serving through speaking and Bible teaching.

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Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/juliesanders/

ABOUT HEATHER RIGGLEMAN



When Heather speaks and writes, she boldly takes women by the hand and leads them to the home their hearts have longed for—a place where God takes the messy moments and broken pieces of their lives and fits them *perfectly* together through his

amazing grace.

Known as "*The Real Mom*" she authentically shares the beautiful and broken moments of everyday life that push us to embrace God through: motherhood, marriage, family, kids, books, heartache, faith, imperfection, and all the things that reveal his heart. Heather is on staff with [The MOM Initiative](#), [MOMS Together](#) and is an editor for Missions Magazine of [Asia Pacific Media Ministries](#). She is also a frequent contributor to [Today's Christian Woman](#), [Focus on the Family](#), [Faithvillage](#), [MOPS International](#), and is seen monthly on KHGI News for [Good Morning Nebraska](#) as *The Mom Expert*.

Like her book, [Mama Needs a Time Out](#), she uses her life experiences to not only encourage women in the trenches of motherhood, she talks about the power of your "Yes," missional motherhood, marriage, writing, and shaping your identity in Christ. She is represented by Mary Keeley of Books and Such Literary Agency and just finished writing a book for teen moms *including* a guide for mentors of teen moms. You can connect with her on her blog: [Heatherriggleman.com](#).

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HeatherRiggleman Twitter: [@HeatherRig](#)

Pinterest: [HeatherRigg](#)

Notes

ⁱ Lisa Bevere, *Girls with Swords: How to Carry Your Cross Like A Hero*. (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2013), 6.

Do you find yourself tempted to eavesdrop on words shared between friends? What if they were talking about how to make prayer a meaningful part of life as a mom? This is your invitation to lean in close and listen to the conversation when one thirty-something says to a forty-something, "Let's talk about prayer."



Motherhood has a way of bringing us to our knees. A shared passion for prayer brought two moms from different decades and backgrounds together to talk about making prayer work in the trenches of family life. Your prayer life might be barely breathing, just getting started or thirsting for more, but you're welcome to bring your cup to the table and join us. In *Let's Talk About Prayer* you'll find answers moms need to know and tools to grow.

How do we tap into the power of prayer when life works against us?
How should I order my life so I can pray?
How do I tackle praying about so many things?
How do I find the right words to pray?
How do I help my family by praying?

Are these questions you're asking? Would you like to know how to cultivate a prayerful life in chaos? Would you like to manage the mountain of prayer needs and find the right words to pray with confidence? Would you like to pray to impact your family? Join the conversation.



Heather R. Rigglesman & Julie Sanders