



We Are Family

Learning as an Orthodox Christian the importance of filling our home with God and becoming the *kat oikon ekklesia*, the “small church” away from the “big church”

*How is the family a community?
Why do we have family?*

PRAYERS

OPENING PRAYERS—FROM DAILY PRAYERS FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS:

“At all times and in every hour, You are worshiped and glorified in heaven and on earth, Christ our God. Long in patience, great in mercy and compassion, You love the righteous and show mercy to sinners. You call all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. Lord, receive our prayers at the present time. Direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Set our minds aright. Cleanse our thoughts and deliver us from all sorrow, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels that, guarded and guided by their host, we may arrive at the unity of the faith and the understanding of Your ineffable glory. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.”

(Daily Prayers For Orthodox Christians, p. 21)

PRAYER FOR PARENTS:

“Lord and Savior, You have taught us to honor our fathers and mothers, and to show love and obedience toward them. From the depth of my heart I fervently pray to You, sweet Jesus, my God: hear my prayer. Bless my parents who have raised me up with the help of Your grace. Protect them from evil, harm and sickness. Grant them faith, health and joy. Bless all their works that they may give You honor and glory all the days of their lives. Amen.”

(My Orthodox Prayer Book)

CLOSING PRAYERS

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.”

VIRGIN THEOTOKOS:

“Theotokos virgin, hail most blessed Mary, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have given birth to the Savior of our souls.”

PASSAGES, PRAXIS, & PATRISTICS

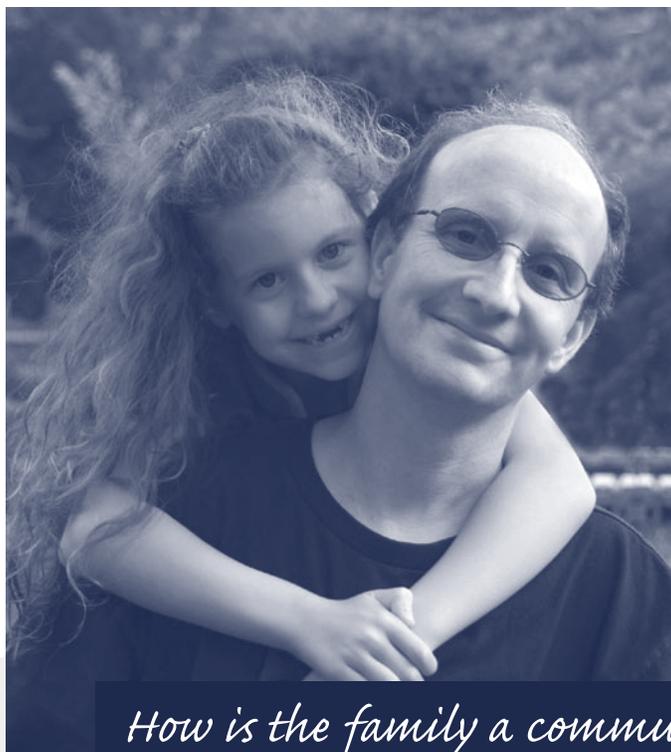
Genesis 1:26-27: Then God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small.” So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in

charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food”—and it was done. God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came—that was the sixth day.

Genesis 2:18-22: Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.”

So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the

man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. So the man named all the birds and all



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the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him. Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him.

Genesis 2:24: That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 20-21, 24: Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates. In times to come your children will ask you, "Why did the Lord our God command us to obey all these laws?" Then tell them, "We were slaves of the king of Egypt, and the Lord rescued us by his great power. Then the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these laws and to honor him. If we do, he will always watch over our nation and keep it prosperous.

Matthew 12: 46-50: Jesus was still talking to the people when his mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside, asking to speak with him. So one of the people there said to him, "Look, your mother and brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak with you." Jesus answered, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Then he pointed to his disciples and said, "Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother, my sister, and my mother.

Some Saints were families of Saints, and others were Saints with pagan parents, spouses, etc. So no matter what kind of family background we come from, all of us are called to be Saints.

Families are a gift of God to help us learn to live in community, the community of saints. Families have very sacred liturgies (works of the people) in our salvation. When two people leave their parents and come before God in the witnessing presence of His people to be joined in the mystery of marriage by God Himself, a new creation has been given the opportunity for salvation. God creates an environment for growth through humility and sacrificial love in His new creation – the married couple. "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matt. 19:6)

Bishop Nicholas of Crete once related the sacredness of the family. He described the relationship of the Holy Trinity as a parallel iconographically of the relationship of a married couple. He said that the husband can be likened to the Father and the wife to the Son, Jesus Christ, and the love and life within the relationship of the couple to the Holy Spirit, often producing a variety of the fruits of the Spirit. He further described the sacredness of their home, saying that the home has two altar tables, the dining table and the marriage bed, and we are to keep them holy.

PARTICIPATION

Work with your family to appraise the contents of your home.

Contact the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America's office of Family Ministry and explore their latest list of materials and family resources.

Visit the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese "Family as Church" web site: <http://www.familyaschurch.org>.

Read pertinent selections from the Bible.

Read *Making Time for Family and Church*, by Rev. Constantine Sitaras, M.Div. Appeared in the publication, *Praxis*, June 2003, Volume 3, Issue 4.

Read *The Christian Family: Pedagogical Mode*, by John J. Booramra. Appeared in the publication, *The Living Pulpit*, July~September 1999, Volume 8, No. 3.

