

Barriers to Family Time Together

Balancing Work and Family

- **Work vs. Family Obligations** – Many family members face the challenge of balancing between work and family obligations. Both require attention. Can work be made more flexible? Are there ways to balance these priorities?
- **Changed Family Roles** – Today more men and women work than ever before, and family roles have shifted. Family members often have competing schedules. How can family members balance schedules and reserve time for each other?
- **Transition from Work to Home** – Often a family member will “bring work home from the office,” either literally or emotionally. What can someone do to make a good transition from work to focusing on home?
- **Working to “Get Ahead”** – Work can become all-consuming as people try to make more money or “get ahead.” How much is too much? When is it time to say no?

Hurried Family Life

- **Overscheduling the Family** – Soccer, dance class, band, volunteer service, movies, hockey — how much does your family have scheduled? “Overscheduling” can inhibit family time together.
- **“Time Famine” or “Time Debt”** – Do you have a famine of time in your life? Are you in “time debt”? How can you slow down and get out of time debt?



Family...

It's All About Time

The Intrusive Consumer Culture

- **Time is Money Ethic** – Our consumer culture suggests “time is money” and shouldn’t be wasted. Do you ever feel guilty for taking some “down time”? How can you avoid this pressure?
- **The Electronic World** – Media is everywhere in so many forms — radio, cell phones, television, the Internet, portable computers, etc. It occupies so much of daily life. Is there an escape for family members?
- **Round-the-Clock Entertainment** – The culture of today pressures family members to always buy, sell, or look for new entertainment — 24 hours a day! News shows and sports shows are continuous. How can the family create its own time and entertainment?

Distance from Family Members

- **Overcoming the Miles** – Family members sometimes find themselves separated by distance because of divorce, commuter relationships, work patterns, or other challenges. What activities can be done to connect across the miles? How do we overcome being “dads at a distance” or “moms over miles”? How can grandparents share time with distant family members?
- **Keeping the Family in Mind** – Long-distance family relationships can make it difficult to keep focused on making family a priority. How do you keep the family in mind and keep relationships healthy?

Ideas for Sharing Family Time

Recreational Time

Time shared in fun and recreational activities, such as:

- Play a game of checkers, chess, or another board game together. There are many “family activity” games such as charades, tag, or IQ games.
- Read a book or a book series together. Take turns reading.
- Get outdoors and go to the park, play a ball game, go bowling, ride bikes, or play on the swings. Recreational activities can range from fishing to flying kites!

Learning Time

Time shared in positive learning activities, such as:

- Visit the museum, a business, local college, or other site of interest and learn about its history and purposes.
- Have all family members share about a topic they are working on or studying once a week/month. Have each family member share their thoughts and ideas on the topic, decide what topics you want to learn more about.
- Pick a specific topic or activity to pursue and learn more about, then put together a journal or scrapbook about it. It could be about a sport, historical figure, musical instrument, animal — whatever interests you!



Work Time

Time shared in working together in a positive way, such as:

- Create a job wheel and decide who gets to do what job each week around the house. Team up and work together to accomplish household tasks.
- Select specific projects you need to do or would like to do as a family to improve your home, such as washing the windows or building a tree house.
- Find a community service project that the family can be involved in together.

Communication/Leisure Time

Time spent in conversation and relaxation together, such as:

- Make a list of 100 questions to provoke conversation and sharing, like “What’s your most memorable experience?” or “How would you change the world and why?” Pick one or two times a week to share and discuss 2-3 questions at dinner or other time.
- Schedule a family meeting time to regularly share feelings, discuss issues, or go on outings.

Family Unity Time

Time spent in activities to build family unity, such as:

- Create a scrapbook that is a history of your family and past ancestors.
- Practice family safety efforts such as making an emergency preparedness plan or a first aid kit.