



From the Desk of Pastor Meyer

Sunday, June 15, is Father's Day, a day set apart to thank God for the men who are our fathers or who served in that role as mentor and caregiver.

The website www.Fatherly.com has a series of articles called, "Twelve questions to ask your dad about..." Some are about your dad's childhood, or his career, or just about life in general.

With that as my springboard, I have come up with my own list of twelve questions to help start a conversation about faith with your dad or with your children! Make the conversation as formal or casual as you want. The goal is to talk about our lives of faith and pass that story on to our children. Take written notes, but I also suggest that you use a recorder of some kind, so you also have your father's actual voice (or your voice) speaking the answers. If your kids are little, take the list and work through the questions yourself, leaving them either a written journal (that's what I did) or a voice or video recording of you answering the questions.

1. Who do you remember first teaching you about Jesus? Was it a family member, Sunday school teacher, or pastor? Is there someone in particular who helped you grow in faith and understand "Jesus loves me" isn't just a song?
2. When and where were you baptized and confirmed? Do you remember either? Talk about what you learned.
3. What family member, friend, or other individual best modeled God's grace to you when you were young, a teen, and as an adult?
4. Tell me about your prayer life. How do you pray? How often? What do you pray for? Do you have a favorite place for prayer?
5. Tell about a time when you had to trust the promises of God.
6. Tell about a time when it seemed God was silent, or when you felt distant from Him.
7. Tell about a time when God answered your prayers or a time when He did not answer your prayers like you had hoped.
8. What has been the greatest joy as a child of God? What has been the biggest challenge or struggle?
9. Has there ever been a moment where you thought your faith died? Has there been a moment when your faith grew?
10. Has there been a moment where you particularly felt God's love, grace, mercy, and compassion?

11. Finish this sentence: "I go to church because..."

12. Finish this sentence: "My prayer for you is..."

13. Bonus: What is your favorite Bible story? Why?

When God blesses men with the gift of fatherhood, we are God's representative to our family. It is our responsibility and joy to care for our families with food, home, clothes, emotional support and medical care. But, dads, don't forget the importance of spiritual care and leadership in the home. Studies show that when dads are involved with the spiritual formation of a child's life, especially with family devotions and attending church, children are much more likely to remain in the faith. Be the example and mode, for your children and grandchildren in what it looks like to be a faithful child of God. Practice fatherly leadership – get yourself, your wife, and your kids up and come to Sunday school. If you are vacationing this summer, Google "LCMS churches" and make worship part of the time.

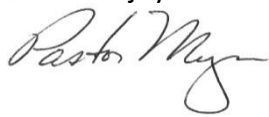
There are times for fathers to admit that their heart is breaking; there are times to stiffen the upper lip and get things done. It's OK for fathers to exfoliate with charcoal-based body scrub and a luffa. It's also OK for dads to shave with an old-school safety razor and a splash of Old Spice to start the day. It's OK for a father to sit in silent pride with his daughter when she lands her first professional job. It's also just fine for a dad to hug his son and sob with him when his long-time girlfriend breaks the relationship off. It's ok for a dad to stumble over words when reading the Bible with his kids; it's OK to not know exactly what to pray except, "Lord, have mercy," or "Thy will be done." Whatever you do as a father, do it faithfully and in love.

I know there are some who read this who have had a less-than-perfect father. For you, Father's Day brings up some very bad, hard memories. Sadly, this side of heaven, there will always be some men who fall far short of their God-given responsibilities and sin terribly against their children. I'm sad for you. I also know there are some men among us who are not fathers, or whose children have fallen asleep in Christ. Know that your identity is not in the size of your family, but in your own place as a son of God in His Kingdom. If I can help you, dad, please feel welcome to talk with me.

This Father's Day, give your dad some love. Whether it's with a tie or baseball cap, a trip to the ballpark or an afternoon on the golf course, a phone call or a Zoom video chat, tell him how much you love him. If, like me, your dad is celebrating into eternity with Jesus, hoist a cool glass of iced tea in his memory, and tell a couple of stories about their grandpa to your own kids. Dads, give your kids a hug and a kiss (if they'll let you). Then, turn to your Heavenly Father in prayer, thank Him for the gift of your dad and being a dad, and for His fatherly love and mercy toward you.

As a final note, you'll find my letter to the congregation announcing receiving the Call to St. Paul, Enid, Oklahoma. As of this writing, no decision has yet been made. I include it here for the historical record. Your words and prayers are appreciated.

Peace & joy

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pastor Mike".