

// Family Ministry **Twenty-One Habits of Highly Functioning Families**

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REVIEW: *Twenty-One Habits of Highly Functioning Families* is a simple but brilliant book. It is a helpful and insightful book to assist families who want to function well as a family and develop Godly habits in their home. Each chapter ends with helpful and often fun questions to get families talking about their habits and share their daily lives.

SNAPSHOT

Habit #1: Say Thank You

Families need a sense of thankfulness, not a sense of entitlement. Parents and children need to have a spirit that is thankful, not a spirit that is expectful. A family can only change when it is truly appreciative.

Habit #2: Give Hugs (and lots of them)

Simple physical touch is a simple human need. Families would be different if they were willing to embrace and physically show their love for one another daily in this simple way.

Habit #3: Talk to Each Other

A family needs to be in the habit of opening up, not shutting down. Talking to one another matters. If a family is not regularly talking about the small things, they will not be able to talk about the big things that life may bring.

Habit #4: Laugh Together

Laughter was created by God and is a gift from God for a family. Laughter is an outpouring of a spirit of joy in the heart. Life is often too serious; the ability to laugh allows a family the opportunity to relax and release the tension of the day.

Habit #5: Be There and Be Available

Being home is one thing, being home and available is another. Parents need to make themselves fully present in and open to their children. These are the important moments to share, laugh, or just be together.

Habit #6: Say Lots of "I Love You"

There are too many children growing up having never heard a parent tell them they are loved. One of the best habits for highly functioning family is regular and frequent verbal expression of love. Family members might know they are loved, but they also need to hear it.



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Habit #7: Have Bible Study

Family Bible studies should not be a chore but rather a joy. They should be times where a family can come together to talk and study the Bible in ways that are specific to their home life.

Habit #8: Pray

Bible study and prayer go hand in hand in a functioning home. Prayer is so very important in being better fathers and mothers, but also in children being better children. Families need to take time to pray and make it a habit in their daily routine.

Habit #9: Turn Off the Devices

Instead of family coming home and sitting around talking, now families sit in the same room with every person on their own device. In order for a family to function and connect, they must make a conscious decision to assign a time every day when all devices are turned off.

Habit #10: Serve Others Together

The habit of serving others is spelled: S-E-R-V-E: *Seek God and His kingdom, Eternity must be on our mind, Remember what other have done for you, (Be) virtuous, and Exemplify Christ.*

Habit #11: Wrestle Or Play Baby Dolls or Play in the Backyard

If parents want a family that is functioning, they must be spending quality time together in ways that are active. Things like riding a bike, throwing a ball or even cooking keep a family close.

Habit #12: Eat Together

Meal times can be times when a family turns off devices, prays, shares, and laughs. Eating together brings the whole family together not to fuss or fight, but to enjoy time connecting over a meal.

Habit #13: Talk About Life

Life can be hard, but not sharing about life within the family is like a firecracker in your hand. In an open hand the firecracker will do damage but will not destroy; but in a closed hand, the firecracker will do far more damage. A family that is willing to be open with each other about the hard stuff will survive the damages and hurts of life's explosions.

Habit #14: See God Together

A family needs to have times to let go of life and just go out to see God together outside or someplace special. Spending time together as a family and seeing God will give a family perspective and refreshment.

Habit #15: Don't Yell Across the House

God expects us to think before we speak. Thinking in a functioning family is spelled: "T-H-I-N-K." Before someone speaks they should ask: *"Is it True? Helpful? Inspiring? Necessary? or Kind?". Families that choose to think before they yell, avoid hurt feelings and enjoy encouragement.*

Habit #16: Say Some, "I'm Really Glad God Gave Me You"

"Paying compliments is like filling your car with gas. It gives us what we need to go the next few hundred miles..." The same is true for a family. Verbal affirmations and encouragement fill the relational tanks of a spouse, a child or a sibling.

Habit #17: Lock the Bedroom Door

This is not about locking the parent's bedroom door to get privacy or locking children in their rooms for punishment. It is actually the opposite. Families should sometimes keep children out of their personal rooms and in the presence of the whole family as much as possible.

Habit #18: Go on Dates

Life gets busy and there is always excuses for why dates cannot or don't happen. Parents must take the time to have dates. They do not have to be expensive or fancy. Parents can find simple things to do together.

Habit #19: Go on Vacation

Like dates, there is always an excuse or reason why vacations cannot happened or will not happen. Even God rested after his work and so should families. Vacations are times to rest, reflect, and experience new things. They are also times to spend some time with God together.

Habit #20: Listen

Communication in a highly functioning family is more than talking. It is also listening. Good listening reflects our relationship with God. A family needs to listen to each other and also be listening to God. Satan wants nothing more than for families to stop listening to each other and to God.

Habit #21: Worship and Be Involved Regularly at Your Local Church

The final habit is the most important habit for a family to be a highly functioning, Godly family. A family must understand the reason we are put on earth is to worship God. Worshipping together in the local church must be a habit and priority. A family must be connected to the family of God.