

Daily Siesta, Weekly Fiesta

Mark 6:31 “And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.”

When my daughter was 7, she and I were enjoying a large chocolate covered ice cream on one of Dairy Queen's outside tables. In the middle of cleaning up our melting ice cream messes, she and I were having one of our endearing father-daughter moments. You see, once a month, our family enjoys a one-on-one “date” of sorts with one parent taking one child to a place/restaurant of their choice. These intimate times endear our hearts to each other, and we also have some very interesting conversations. This one was no exception. While licking our ice creams, my little girl casually revealed why her relationship was so close to her daddy (and mommy). This little 7 year-old “scholar” mentioned that it was probably all the one-on-one times we have together and as a family (the ice cream probably helps, too! :).

Life can be hectic. The daily grind and full schedule of life can sap all of your time and energy. And before you know it, you haven't spent time with your God or with your family. As you can see in our text, things were extremely busy for Jesus and His disciples as well. It was getting so busy that they weren't getting any down time (“no leisure”) nor were they being able to eat. After kids arrive on the scene, many couples don't know the meaning of “alone time.” And many families never experience a nice, quiet dinner together.

Let us help. We have a couple of really great ideas. Our family has practiced this for years.

First of all, every family should have what I call a “**daily siesta.**” For centuries, certain Spanish countries took a short nap or rest called a “siesta.” The “siesta” is normally taken after lunch or early afternoon. You should schedule time every day to rest by yourself. During this time, you can start by relieving your stress with God in prayer, Bible reading, a Christian book or some Christian music. Then you can unwind with a personal hobby or taking a nap. Often when children are babies or toddlers, parents give their little ones and themselves an afternoon nap. After a few years, though, many stop this really important practice. Continue the practice no matter the age for the rest of your life. Every day, give some time for each member of the family to rest by themselves. You'll find that this practice does wonders.

Secondly, every family should have what I call a “**weekly (and monthly) fiesta.**” In Spanish, a “fiesta” is a celebration of something like a birthday. Each week, your family should celebrate two things.

First, you should celebrate your marriage. Every week, my wife and I set aside one evening to spend time with just the two of us. Our kids know this night as “date night.” We both believe that this one simple practice has greatly strengthened our marriage through the years. Even if there is no one to babysit your kids, you still should have a

“date night” every week. Actually, we have rarely used babysitters for our kids, and our “date nights” have still been great! Just simply put the kids down to sleep, and don't let them bother you unless it is an emergency. (If this seems foreign to you, you should look into our other articles dealing with nap and bed times.)

Here are some ideas:

- Play a game together. I believe my in-laws, Amy's parents, have played games together for years.
- Watch a show together. Just make sure it is wholesome and Christian. You are trying to build your marriage, not destroy it :). And most media today is more destructive than constructive to a godly home.
- Enjoy a snack or meal together of special foods that you enjoy and wouldn't normally be able to afford as an entire family.
- Read a book together. My wife and I began our marriage doing this almost every night.

Every week, have a “fiesta” and celebrate your marriage.

The second way your family can have a “weekly fiesta” is reserving one day every week where your family does something together. This time should normally be spent with just your family alone. Otherwise, you will miss building extremely important one-on-one time with each other. You can choose to vary your time together each week. Here are some ideas we've done:

- Go out to eat. Let each member take turns picking their favorite!
- Go to a park. Play together on the playset, sandbox, etc.... You could also ride bikes together or skate together at a park. Our family has enjoyed skating together.
- Play board games or a sports game. When our kids were only four, we enjoyed teaching them board games with very simple basic games like “Pegs in the Park” or “Going to Bethlehem.”
- Go somewhere special like a zoo, museum, or amusement park. Our family has invested in yearly memberships to all of the above!

The possibilities are endless. Every week our family does something special together. This time is crucial for building relationships with each other. I, as the father, even build the excitement each week by describing what we're going to do. Our family really looks forward to our “weekly fiestas.”

A third fiesta is having a monthly one-on-one time with your kids. Father takes one of the kids while mother stays home with the other children and vice versa. The time doesn't need to be long (ours are normally 20-30 minutes long). This activity doesn't need to be anything major. The main purpose is building a personal relationship with

your child that will last a life-time. You'll be surprised how these personal interactions really build a trust between your offspring that allows them to open up to you.

So, friends, please take to heart these very important celebrations. Every day have a “daily siesta.” Every week, have a “weekly fiesta” for your marriage and your family. And don't forget to include monthly “dates” with your kids, too. Don't let life push you too fast. “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.” Celebrate each moment God gives you as a family!