

Family: a place of grace

by Susie Pek, global director

Family is our first home, the place where life begins and love is learned. Ideally, it is a refuge in times of storm and a school where we discover patience, forgiveness and joy. Within its embrace, we are shaped by gentle words and sometimes difficult lessons yet always surrounded by bonds that remind us we belong. Family is not perfect, but it is precious — designed by God to be both a safe harbor and a living classroom of grace.

Communication is one of the greatest gifts God has given us. It allows us to share our hearts, express our needs and build relationships. Yet it is also one of the greatest challenges we face. A careless word can wound deeply, while a word spoken with love can heal and restore.

In family life, we learn how to master that skill. Home is where filters often disappear and intimacy gives us freedom to speak openly. But that freedom can also lead to misunderstandings. We assume our loved ones know what we mean, or we expect them to read our thoughts. When they don't, frustration builds and relationships strain.

Scripture reminds us of the power of words: "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones" (Prov. 16:24). Within the family, words can either strengthen bonds or create distance. A simple request, if unclear, can spark unnecessary conflict. A hurt feeling, if left unspoken, can grow into resentment. Silence, when used as punishment or even as a weapon, becomes a wall that communicates rejection instead of love.

Healthy family communication rests on three pillars: **clarity, transparency and gentleness**. Clarity ensures our words are understood. Transparency allows us to share honestly when we are hurt or disappointed. Gentleness reminds us that intimacy does not excuse disrespect. Even in the closest relationships, simple words like "please," "thank you" and "excuse me"

express signs of love and respect. And let's not forget some of the hardest simple words of all: "I'm sorry."

Listening is just as essential as speaking. Proverbs 18:13 warns: *"To answer before listening – that is folly and shame."* And James 1:19 instructs: "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." Listening requires patience, but it opens the door to understanding. It shows our family members that we value their thoughts and feelings.

Of course, there are moments when emotions run high and we need time before we can talk calmly. In those moments, it is wise to say, "I need a little time, but we will talk later." This simple phrase communicates both honesty and commitment to resolution. It prevents silence from becoming a weapon and instead turns it into a pause that prepares the way for peace.

Family is God's gift. It is the place where we learn forgiveness, patience and love. It is where we practice speaking the truth in love and listening with open hearts. Good communication does not mean we will never disagree, but it does mean we will handle disagreements with respect and grace.

As we pray for families around the world, may we be reminded that words matter. They can build up or tear down. They can bring healing or cause harm. May the Lord grace us with wisdom, words of kindness, gentleness, encouragement and truth in love.

Thank you for using your words to present families around the world before the throne of God asking for protection, salvation and restoration.

In his amazing love,
Susie

MAY 2026 Prayers for women in East and Southern Africa

1. Lord, heal **Angolan** women scarred by war, poverty and loss. Provide their daily bread and bring them hope. "[The Lord] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Ps 147:3).
2. God, protect every vulnerable female in **Botswana** from exploitation and abuse and release the oppressed. May your healing power bring holistic health to victims of violence. (Ps. 9:9)
3. Lord, uplift **Comoros** island women trapped in poverty and isolation. Please provide them hope, sustenance and opportunities for education. (1 Pet. 5:7)
4. Father, may couples in **Eswatini** honor their marriage covenants and choose to work out their differences so that families are not broken by separation or divorce. (Eph. 5:31-33)
5. God, strengthen the believers in **Ethiopia** who are persecuted for their faith. May they identify with Jesus and find grace to stand in you. (1 Pet. 4:13-14)
6. Lord, shield **Kenyan** women from gender-based violence and abuse. Grant them courage, justice and healing, for you are their refuge and stronghold in times of trouble. (Ps. 18:2)
7. Lord, break the chains of child marriage in **Madagascar** as you open educational doors for girls and bless them with wisdom and unshakeable purpose. (Ps. 138:8)
8. God, protect **Mauritius** women from human trafficking, violence and exploitation. Please bring swift justice, deep healing and lasting peace through your mighty love. (Ps. 34:18)
9. Father, in Jesus' name, heal **South Africa** from harmful patriarchal norms that endanger women and restrict their safety, health and economic freedom. (Gal. 3:28)
10. God, bring healing for women in **Tanzania** suffering from illness, emotional trauma and spiritual wounds. May they find peace and health in you. (Isa. 61:1-3)
11. May women in **Botswana** recognize their value in your eyes, Lord. Enable them to use their talents for you and as leaders in their families and communities. (Eph. 2:10)
12. Lord, stop the abomination of Eswatini girls being raped when they go to their uncles or other relatives to ask for help with school fees and supplies. (Ps. 82:4)
13. Your word says that you deliver your people "from death and keep them alive in famine." Father, provide for your children in the **Somali** region of Kelafo. (Ps. 33:18-19)
14. God, deliver from the kingdom of darkness to your kingdom of light and life **South African** women who have been trained as traditional healers. (Col. 1:13)
15. Lord, bring financial breakthrough, employment and business opportunities for women in **Tanzania**, blessing the work of their hands and breaking the cycle of poverty. (Phil. 4:19)
16. Father, we pray for the restoration of **Botswana** households. May there be peace, communication and healing in all relationships. (Rom. 12:18)
17. Lord, we pray against gender-based violence in **Eswatini**. May the killing of women by their loved ones stop in Jesus' name. (Prov.11:29)
18. God, please bring peace to the Tigray region of **Ethiopia**. Work peace in the hearts of the leaders so that the suffering of the people may stop. (Ps. 27:1-3)
19. Lord, break harmful expectations in **South Africa** that diminish single women. Let them know their worth in you so that they never feel pressured to marry. (1 Cor. 7)
20. Heavenly Father, we ask for your protection for women and girls in **Tanzania** from human trafficking, exploitation and deception. (Ps. 127:7-8)
21. Lord, clothe the women of **Botswana** with strength and dignity so they may speak and walk in wisdom and face the future without fear. (Prov. 31:25)
22. Father, we pray for **Eswatini's** children living in deep poverty, leading their households and having the heavy responsibility of caring for their younger siblings. (Prov. 19:17)
23. God, you are the just judge and see the women in **Ethiopia** experiencing oppression. Advocate for them, Lord, that they may receive justice. (Ps. 103:6)
24. Lord, set women free in **South Africa** who are being deceived by wicked religious men who preach your Word but their hearts and actions are far from you. (Matt. 15:8-9)
25. Father, please protect the girls of **Tanzania** from early marriages and teenage pregnancies, preserving their future and destiny in you. (Jer. 29:11)
26. Lord, bring emotional stability, mental peace and freedom from anxiety, depression and fear among women undergoing healing from trauma in **Zanzibar** and **Pemba**. (Ps. 34:4)
27. Enable the women of **Botswana** to remain steadfast in you, Father, as they navigate the challenges and anxiety of life through your grace and wisdom. (James 1:5)
28. God, you govern all the nations. We pray for peaceful and fair June elections in **Ethiopia**. May righteous and just leaders be elected. (Prov. 29:4)
29. Lord, bring justice, protection and restoration for **South African** women who have been exploited by the very ones who should be supporting them. (Exodus 14:14)
30. God, we pray for peace, understanding, and love in families and marriages in **Tanzania**. Bring healing where relationships are broken. (Col. 3:15)
31. Help women in **South Africa**, Father, to trust and delight in you, believe your word and embrace how much you value them. (Ps. 37)