

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

My own father was a good man, a loving, hard-working, faithful provider and protector of his family, a man of faith. Still, as I observe dads with their sons today, I see a kind of relationship I wish my father and I might have shared, a closeness that seemed to escape us in spite of the love I know he had for me and I for him. Times have changed and parenting is different today than what I remember growing up - and so much of what I see is good, so very good, indeed. What Fathers Day means to each of us depends so much on our relationship with our dad and his with us. So, on this Father's Day weekend, here is a litany of prayers for dads of all kinds. And following the litany, a little fatherly advice from someone whom many call "Father" though he has no children of his own...

Let us pray...

For all our fathers, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who had no opportunity to know their own dad, let us pray to the Lord...

For our fathers who have died, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who grieve the loss of their dad, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who are chronically or terminally ill, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers expecting the birth of a child, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers awaiting the arrival of an adopted child, let us pray to the Lord...

For men who desire to be fathers, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who see the sun rise and set in the eyes and smiles of their children, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers in good relationships with their children and for those who aren't, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who grew up without a dad, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who have failed their children and who are trying again, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers whose hearts break over the troubles their children face, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers of children who won't forgive their dad, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who won't forgive their children, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who will be forgotten or ignored on this Fathers Day, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who work multiple jobs to provide for their families, let us pray to the Lord...

For unemployed fathers, desperately looking for work, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers whose sacrifices are unknown to their families, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers unable to provide what they want their children to have, let us pray to the Lord...

For every father mourning the loss of a child he loved, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who are single parents, let us pray to the Lord...

For divorced and separated fathers who miss their children, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers estranged from or barred from seeing their children, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers away in the military and for all those who serve in harm's way, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers of sons and daughters lost in war, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers who are in prison, let us pray to the Lord...

For fathers of children who've been abused or gone missing, let us pray to the Lord...

For grand- and great-grandfathers who care for their children's children, let us pray to the Lord...

For teachers and coaches and mentors who've been "father" to many young people, let us pray to the Lord...

For priests, men called Father, who have no children of their own, let us pray to the Lord...

For all fathers in need of our prayers, let us pray to the Lord...

God our Father, in your wisdom and love you made all things. Bless our fathers, living and deceased. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their families, may love and honor them always with a spirit of profound respect. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

And a little fatherly advice for Fathers Day...

- Dads, you can't too often tell your children how much you love them... • You can't too many times hug your children tight and kiss them good night... • There's no limit on how many times you can take each of your children, individually, for a walk, a talk, a ride or an ice cream cone... • Call your children by name and have special names for each of them... • Be a father whose thoughts, words and deeds set a standard for his children who will be parents... • If you have a boy, be sure he hears you call him son in a way that lets him know how happy and proud you are to be his father... • Every son, without even knowing it, looks for his father's blessing on who he is and who he will become: find a thousand ways to give your son your blessing...
- A daughter learns how a man loves a woman through how her father loves his wife and his girls: be the best of loving teachers for the women in your life... • Make sure your children know that you're a man of faith who believes in the God whom Jesus calls his Father... • Pray with your children at home: at table, at night before bed, when times are hard and when times are great... • Pray with your children at church every Sunday so they'll know the place God holds in your heart... • A father's relationship with his children is a great and untapped natural and spiritual resource: wisely conserve and generously share the resource you are...
- Too many dads come to the end of their lives wishing they'd done "more of this and less of that" with and for their children: take stock of all this now, before the time's too short... • You can be sure that your children, in their heart of hearts, want you to be the dad that you, in your heart of hearts, want to be for them: never be afraid to be the father all your hearts desire...

Happy Father's Day!