

# Shaping family patterns to reflect God's values

## Five things you can do now to refocus your family

**1. Break the electronic addiction.** Too often family members are isolated by their iPods, cell phones, computers, game boys, and television. Designate specific times when these are to be turned off and you gather as a family to talk about what you have discovered in scripture, challenges you face in living out your faith, how God is using you to reach friends, and things for which God is burdening your heart.

**2. Think global...act local.** Integrate a global perspective into your family's life. **Begin to study other cultures together.** You can use *Operation World*, which provides insight into cultures and how much they have been exposed to Christianity. Look around your community for local agencies where you and your family can serve together. **Visit ethnic neighborhoods, festivals, or restaurants and experience the culture.** Work with international students at a local college.

**3. Rethink and reshape holidays.** Recapture holidays and celebrate them in ways that emphasize God's Kingdom agenda. **Move the focus from the secular to the religious, from being self-centered to being other-centered, and from being materialistic to being spiritual.** You can even create new holidays or choose to celebrate those holidays on the Christian calendar which our society normally does not recognize. Have a party for God!

**4. Rediscover the power of scripture.** People spend far too little time in the scriptures. **Carve out time for each person in the family personally and the family together to study God's word.** Some ideas include reading it before or after meals, before bedtime, evening "quiet time", etc. Use modern translations or vary them for different perspectives. Talk about what you read and isolate what you are expected to do based on what you read.

**5. Alter your "change" orientation.** Begin to focus your family on freeing up financial resources for God's Kingdom. **Start saving your loose change. Get the whole family involved in setting goals for giving and selecting specific ministries or causes to support.** Will it be helping the homeless? Alleviating child slavery? Supporting orphans? Supporting a specific missionary? Having a goal and charting your progress creates excitement (especially for kids) and helps build your willingness to faith to a higher goal. Once you succeed here, begin to look more closely at how your money is spent and **how you can free up more resources (maybe involving simplifying your life) to advance God's Kingdom.**