



Dear Friends,

October 24th

Our family is in its fifth year of homeschooling. We have six children: a thirteen-year-old boy, eight-year-old girl, six-year-old girl, four-year-old girl, two-year-old girl, and a one-year-old boy. My husband is gone from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, so morning family devotions are not a possibility at this time in our lives. We have them at night, and I do a time of Bible, hymn singing, and Bible memory in the morning.

I am usually very diligent and organized except that, in the last couple of years, I have not been successful in getting what I wanted done in school. I needed a plan and was frustrated at the lack of knowing how to go about creating one. I would try, but it would then fall apart because of all the little ones and the interruptions of the day.

When I saw Teri calling for people to be test pilots, I just knew that this was an answer to prayer. I was at the point of being desperate and despondent because of my frazzled school days. I wanted to be victorious and a joyful mother of children, but I knew if I went on anymore in the way I was going, I would be cast for the role of the Wicked Witch of the West.

So I went to work on my schedule, and it revolutionized my life! I was now feeling as if I really could do all I wanted to do and keep my sanity at the same time. There is a time slot for everything (devotions, exercise, computer, etc.).

I wasn't able to do my whole schedule all at once, but, little by little, I added to it until we were accomplishing much more than I ever dreamed we could! In those first weeks, where we only did half of my schedule, we accomplished much more than when we floundered around for a whole day without a schedule. Even on the days when we experienced blessed interruptions, I could keep calm and then quietly resume the next day . . . not worrying that we were going to be far behind, but knowing that because I had been on a steady path it wouldn't take much to catch up.

I encourage all moms who have much to accomplish to consider this way of scheduling. I had looked at almost every organizational book there was, and I still couldn't get to where I wanted to be until I applied this method! It REALLY works, and it makes sense. It is a lot of fun; you won't be sorry you tried! Your children will rise up and call you blessed. Your husband will think that you are just the most wonderful woman that ever walked on the face of the earth . . . well, he will be pleased!

From Carrie





The Key to Successful Scheduling

There IS a starting point for success in daily scheduling . . . schedule our own personal time with the Lord each day. When we can schedule and remain faithful to this time, the foundation and cornerstone of our day, we can succeed in scheduling. For us to have time alone with the Lord, we are going to find we must plan for those particularly important moments. If we simply try to have our devotion during our first free, quiet moment, we will probably come to the end of the day and realize it has not happened. We will resolve to try harder tomorrow, but the cycle will be repeated the next day and the next.

We are not wise women if we are trying to accomplish the Lord's agenda in our own energy and strength. Where does our dependence on the Lord come from? Where do we gather our daily manna? Is it not from our private time alone in the Word, in prayer, in memorizing Scripture, and meditating on it? This is an absolutely crucial time for us. Is your life busy and full? Absolutely! Could you spend this time doing something else? Absolutely! Is there any other way for you to use this time that would produce more lasting or greater benefits for you or your family? NO!

HOW TO SCHEDULE A QUIET TIME

How, practically speaking, do you schedule a personal quiet time despite all the responsibilities and demands you experience as a homeschool mom? You pray, look at your day, and be creative. You make your quiet time a planned part of your day and remain faithful to it. Does it have to be early in the morning? No, but that often is the best time. You start the day with your focus on the Lord, your heart seeking Him. If you have little children, it is easier to be undisturbed if your devotion is while they are still sleeping.

Will it be hard to get up earlier? Probably. But why make up your mind that you are too tired to get up? Just try it! For years, I felt I needed eight hours of sleep to function well. But, I also regularly struggled with long, sleepless nights. Then, I changed to seven hours of sleep with a short rest in the afternoon. It has been wonderful, because now I sleep great at night. Had you told me several years ago that I would have to survive on seven hours of sleep, my fear of being tired all day, every day, would have been overwhelming.

My husband and I go to bed at 10:30 p.m., and the alarm clock goes off at 5:25 a.m. I go in to nurse the baby and then have a half-hour devotion before family morning Bible time at 6:25 a.m. I spend ten minutes reading a chapter in the Bible, picking a verse which is meaningful to me,



Interruptions to a Schedule

What will you do when there are interruptions to your schedule? Perhaps the baby needs to be changed during morning Bible time. Or maybe two of the children are squabbling during their playtime together. There are dentist appointments in the middle of the morning or one of the children is sick and wants to sit on Mommy's lap all day. The phone rings; the doorbell rings; one of the other children interrupts to ask a question.

Interruptions are many and varied. They will come and disturb the very best of schedules. How do we view these interruptions? First, we want to see them as God's intervention in our day. "My times *are* in thy hand. . ." (Psalms 31:15). "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4). If we know interruptions come from the Lord, then we do not need to be frustrated, impatient, or angry over them. We want to use them to accomplish their purpose not only in our lives but in the lives of our children. So much of this will simply come out of our attitude. Will we treat this interruption with a quiet and gentle spirit? As we are able to receive God's grace in this area, we will find our homes becoming the peaceful havens we desire them to be.

PLAN INTERRUPTIONS

Schedule routine appointments such as dental checkups when they will have the least impact on your school day. If your most intense school occurs in the morning, schedule these appointments for the afternoon. This also applies to shopping and running errands. Try as much as possible to keep these interruptions, that you can control, from coming during your school hours.

Avoid classes and activities that take you away from home during your school day. Often these will look enticing to homeschoolers, but they can rob you of the quality and quantity schooltime that you desire and need. A one hour class in the morning involves two hours by the time everyone gets ready to go, arrives at class, is in class, and returns home. The focus is off of school routine; Mom is tired, and the day is left to itself. This is acceptable once in a while, but on a weekly basis is certain to bring discouragement to a homeschooling mom's heart. Stay home during the day! Use evenings and weekends for being out and about. Your homeschool will benefit greatly from this decision. You will be amazed at how much more smoothly school will run if you stay home during school hours! Gauge how you use your time by the priorities God has called you to specifically.