

Practical Tips for Families

We offer here four suggestions that can be helpful in building healthy Orthodox families, parishes, and monasteries.

1. **Respect.** *Everyone is made in the image and likeness of God!* This is very holy and serious fact. Respect others. No two people are the same and we should stop trying to make other people like ourselves.

2. **Frustrations.** *Do not take our your frustrations on those near and dear to you.* This is such a common temptation--to hold in our anger or frustration towards other people or circumstances, but then to "release" it on those whom we love. Perhaps we do this because we feel most safe with our loved ones, but it is in no way the right thing to do.

3. **Time.** All in all, *we are given precious little time on this earth.* Yet we spend so much of it being busy with things we think are so necessary, all the while neglecting spending time with those dear to us.

4. **Inheritance.** What do we really pass on to our children? You might think it is the house or the bank account or the stock, but in reality, the best inheritance we can give our children is *our own spiritual life.* What was our relationship with God? How did we face life's ups and downs? What was our moral character? This is what we really leave to our children. Let us make St. Paul's words to Timothy our own: "*I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you.*" (II Timothy 1:5)

In a similar vein, a monk was asked recently what is the best thing that parents can do for their children, and he replied that *the parents should love each other!*