

What to Do If Your Children Leave the Church?

By Fr. Patrick Tishel

What you shouldn't do is leave the church also. This might sound ridiculous, but parents whose children leave are often tempted to give up. "*My child, the fruit of my life is not in the Church, therefore I've failed and what is the point of staying?*" Some other times, parents lose steam and interest because their focus of attention, their children, are drifting away. But this is just a temptation and the opposite of what we should do.

When faced with a calamity like this, we should instead run to the Church, increase our zeal, rev up our engines and be like the importunate widow; nag God on behalf of our children or spouse for their salvation and return.

Be an example of fidelity, constancy. Don't be swayed; don't give up; don't despair. The end hasn't come yet. Fight on behalf of your child until your last breath. All your prayers, one spiritual father said, go into his spiritual bank account so that at the time of his return or repentance, all of this grace pours in beyond his efforts.

Here are some suggestions of prayers that you can do for your children:

- Akathist to the Mother of God
- Canon to the Mother of God
- Special Akathist to the Mother of God, Nurturer of Children
- Read the Psalter
- Attend Divine Services
- Give their names for prayers to churches and monasteries
- Read the Life of St. Monica (available [here](#)) and other suffering parents
- Gospel accounts of parents that brought their children to the Lord, dead or alive, possessed or sick