

Organising for Success

*Maxine McLellan,
author of "Family Buried Alive--Help on the Way!"*

Our household is a hub of activity. Being organised is essential in order to allow for flexibility in our lives and in our home education goals. Getting organised is not a one-time event but an ongoing project requiring diligence, consistency and good humour. The less than 1200 square foot, 8½ room house we live in houses our adult family of four, a cat, a dog, two girls who come daily to be "home educated" and often to sleep overnight, our growing family business (JOY Center of Learning), our children's business (AW-some Web Designs), numerous pieces of large printing equipment, my pastor/husband's church office, and most of the contents of our old church building while we worship in facilities rented for Sundays only. Our living room is our church meeting room for weekday events. Without diligence we could be buried within less than a month!

Webster's dictionary tells us that to organise, one must first begin, and then set in order. Order leads to orderliness, which means, "clean, neat, tidy, well-kept, efficient, calm, peaceful, quiet and untroubled." Regarding success, Webster gives the following definitions, "a satisfactory outcome, coming about as was hoped for." Satisfactory has the synonym of adequate, which means, "acceptable, good enough, but not remarkable!" I Corinthians 14:40 says, "*But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*" We personally strive for the acceptable, good enough, but not remarkable because to strive for the perfect is impossible under our present circumstances and may be for you as well.

Success then would be a satisfactory outcome, coming about as a result of our activity. True success would not be measured by the world's standards, but by God's standards. It is the coming about of calmness, peacefulness, quietness and a sense of being untroubled in spirit! What a legacy to hand on to your children and to your children's children.

To effectively educate your children at home, it is important to be as organised as you can be, within reason. I know of a family with six children under eight years of age living in a small house trailer – perfection cannot be their goal but organization can be! If the house and the schedule are in a constant state of disaster, the family atmosphere is usually less than it could be. In fact, confusion and strife will often reign.

Some important steps to take, and questions to ask to bring the schedule and the home under control:

1. Assess where you are right now as far as your level of organisation is in your (a) Schedule - look at your responsibilities for church, home, education, social and personal commitments; (b) Home - what is the prevalent atmosphere?; (c) Home education processes - what is happening?
2. Where would you like to be in each of those areas? Establish goals as a family.
3. What is vitally important to you that needs priority in scheduling, home and education?
4. For a period of at least two weeks, analyse what you are doing with your time.
5. Pare down your commitments to allow proper time and energy to achieve the goals you have set in keeping with God's will. Many families are defeated in their home educating task because they never truly give it the time and energy such a commitment demands.
6. In assessing your home, stand in the doorway of each room and area of your home and ask yourself: What is in the room that should not be, or is out of place? What items could be better used in another location? What could be given away, sold or thrown and never be missed? What changes should be made to make this room more serviceable, comfortable, and inviting? How could we creatively use this space? (We use the areas at the bottom and the top of our staircase as our "auxiliary offices" or work stations daily!) What ONE room should we target first? Set a date to begin the transformation!

In taking each of the above steps of action, begin slowly. Pace yourself. Work together as a family team to tackle only one or two areas of change or reorganisation at a time. Your goal is not that of perfection. Remember always that God does not expect the remarkable. However, He does expect our best effort. He will give us His infinite help and grace and creativity to get organised. God will truly reward your desire to be in order and in tune with Him.

With diligence, in time, your schedule, home and spirit will radiate to a troubled world God's calmness, peacefulness, and quietness.

Oh yes, is my house perfect? Not yet, but then my goal is not perfection!

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