

Playing or Praying?

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 11:1-9

*Infants will play near the hole of the cobra, young children will put their hands into the viper's nest.
Isaiah 11:8 —*

Maybe you've heard the expression "The family that prays together stays together." We might also like the sound of something similar: "Folks who play together stay together." I'm fascinated by the idea that healthy families experience a sense of play.

The Bible has very few references to play as a childhood pastime. And the picture in Isaiah 11 isn't mainly about families and relationships having a sense of play. It's a picture of peace that is promised with the coming of Jesus, the righteous One who comes from the family tree of Jesse. It's about the peace Jesus brings so that hateful enemies become good friends and dangerous animals can be led by little children.

Yet in the scene from our text, peace is demonstrated in play. The baby need not be snatched away from the cobra. The young child can rattle the snake! What a playful scene! It's a welcome, delightful scene of healthy, wholesome relationships.

It's a description of the church, which is made up of people once alienated from God and each other, and now at peace. It's a picture of people playing innocently, with no desire to harm, hate, or hurt. It's a picture of people playing not to win or to crush a rival but to honor their Creator. Who knows? Playing together may even lead to praying together.

Prayer

God of life, thank you for the gift of play. Thank you for the ability to catch a ball, walk a woodland trail, or devise word games. Thank you most of all for Jesus! Amen.

Devotion topics: [Life](#), [Family & Relationships](#)

<https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/playing-or-praying-2009-10-09>

Printed on August 14, 2020

