

An estimated 1 million people bid farewell to the old year and usher in the new one by attending the annual midnight dropping of the ball at Times Square in New York City. Speculation calculates another billion around the world view this giant tradition through the media.

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The arrival of a new year brings excitement, hope of new beginnings, a fresh start, and anticipation of good possibilities.

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## Celebration

The spectacular ball drop is one well-known example. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are filled with customs and celebration markers that include food, fun, and family:

- the popular “kiss at midnight”
- fireworks
- the must-have foods that often include black-eyed peas, collard greens, and cornbread
- New Year's resolutions, written, spoken, or silently tucked away in our minds

Celebrations are often unique to families, uniting them in memories and traditions they pass down through the years. For believers, every holiday offers opportunity to bring spiritual focus into the lives of those they celebrate with. The entrance of the New Year is no different. Simple ways exist for families to put a purposeful slant on both bidding farewell to the old year and welcoming the New Year.

## Contemplation

Meditating or remembering helps bring closure to the year past and a fresh focus on new possibilities. Consider including these disciplines as part of beginning a new calendar year:

1. Voicing the memories. Jeremiah 31:21 instructs us to review our lives, remembering our previous path. Consider the highlights of the past year, both the painful and the blessed. Share related testimonies and prayer needs.
2. Visuals for faith. In Joshua 4, God instructed Israel to set up stones for visual reminders of His great power and care when He rolled back the

Jordan River for them to cross. As you gather as a family, bring items to share that trigger memories of His presence and help in the previous year.

3. Verses to equip. Believers often mention having a “life verse” that expresses their testimony or calling. Some seek God for a verse for the coming year or even each month. Consider whether to pursue a family verse for the New Year.
4. Visions for challenge. Just as some set resolutions, determine to pursue personal goals of growth and maturity in your spiritual lives. Or as a family, look ahead to laying groundwork for new ministry or change in current work.

## Anticipation

As the furor of the Christmas season wanes and the New Year approaches, look toward ways to create “holy moments” in the welcoming of another year.

- Lead your family in a study of the celebration of the New Year in other cultures. Include a meal or snack foods. Pray for the needs of the people, the missionaries who serve them, and the gospel to be received and bear fruit.
- Consider hosting a New Year's Eve gathering for families in your neighborhood and going through the components of the contemplation section in this article.

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