



Every year one of the top ten New Year's resolutions is getting more organized. To be honest, it is a constant struggle in our home as well. Too often, we find ourselves "running late." It drives me crazy, but I have to confess that it is mostly my fault.

This year the five of us sat around the dining table and listed one area in our own lives where we wanted to see improvement. Next, each family member took turns sitting on the "hot seat" while the others each suggested one area where personal improvement was needed. My seven-year-old son, who adores me, said, "Mama, I wish you wouldn't get mad at me when I am running late for the bus on your Bible-study day." ouch.

Yes, friends, I'm sometimes fussing at my son just before Bible study, due, in large part, to my own poor planning. *Seven-year-olds are easily distracted and I must allow extra time for that.* While my son's comments were the most impactful *and humbling*

, the common theme for all of us was related to timeliness, focus, discipline and order. If you can relate, consider some of the following free/low-cost online tools for effective organizational success.

### Lifestyle Management Websites

What family couldn't use a little help effectively managing the data and details of a demanding life; appointments, financial information, health records, photos, etc? Lifestyle management websites like Cozi, [www.cozi.com](http://www.cozi.com) are designed to address much of your storage, record keeping, and organizational needs under one virtual roof (I just completed our family's free registration). On the site, you can store documents and photos, create a family calendar, a family journal, shopping and to do lists, individual chores lists ( *like that* ), messages and reminders. In addition, remote access is available.

In addition to Cozi, check out other sites: Famundo ( [www.famundo.com](http://www.famundo.com) ), which features a free option, and an upgrade for \$49/year and jibidee ( [www.jibidee.com](http://www.jibidee.com) )

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), which is free, but offers an optional fax service for a fee. If you do decide to get started with one of these resources, here are a couple useful tips. 1. Don't overwhelm yourself. Choose a single project and work on it in 1-2 hour increments. 2. Always back up your information on an external hard drive or USB storage device.

Chronic disorganization, among other things, usually leads to perpetual tardiness, which can be embarrassing and disrespectful to others as well. A prime example occurred just the other evening when we attended the recent performance of singer, Brian McKnight at the Dakota Club. A couple arrived halfway through the show, and their seats were right-smack in front of the stage. Brian stopped and said, "Oh, I see y'all are on CP Time. Let me just wait a minute until you get settled!" He did, and they sat down sheepishly as the crowd snickered.

Don't let 2011 find you disorganized and disruptive. Instead, utilize one of the online organization and planning tools that work best for you and your family. We'll be doing the same at our house, and to our efforts, we'll add prayers for focus and discipline. I'm looking forward to hearing your success stories and sharing our own. Enjoy!

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