

GATHER *the* FAMILY



...IT IS TIME NOW FOR FAMILY WORSHIP!

This content is taken from video reviews of the book provided by Don Whitney. The book, “Family Worship” can be purchased from www.crossway.org

BOOK: FAMILY WORSHIP. DONALD S WHITNEY. CROSSWAY.

[<https://static.crossway.org/excerpt/family-worship/family-worship-excerpt.pdf>]

THE BOOK COVERS

1. As for Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord: Family Worship in the Bible
2. Here the Reformation Must Begin: Family Worship in Church History
3. Read, Pray, and Sing: The Elements of Family Worship
4. No Family Worship Situation Is Unique: But What If . . . ?
5. Isn't This What You Really Want to Do: Start Today

AUTHOR:

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FAMILY WORSHIP

“...But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

Joshua 24:15.

Overview

What family worship *is* and why it is *important* for every Christian family?

A survey by the Barna Research Group found that 85% of parents with children under age 13 believe they have primary responsibility for teaching their children about religious beliefs and spiritual matters. And yet, a majority of parents don't spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials with their children, instead relying on their church to do all the religious training their children will receive.

Having your children in a Gospel centered, Christ exalting, Bible teaching church is crucial to Christian parenting. However, it is not enough for conveying to your family all that you want to teach them about God.

Moreover, exposure to the church once or twice a week will not impress your children enough with the greatness and glory of God that they will want to pursue Him once they leave your home.

This is why family worship is so important.

More importantly, God deserves to be worshiped daily in *your* home by *your* family.

NEXT STEPS

- Have a conversation with your family about beginning family worship.
- Explain that you still have a lot to learn about it, but that you believe it would be a blessing to your family.
- Ask God to prepare your heart and the hearts of your loved ones to cherish God more deeply through family worship over the next 4 days.
- Think about what might be the best time to lead your family in worship over the next 4 days.

God deserves to be worshiped daily in *your* home by *your* family.

BIBLE EXAMPLES

While there is no direct, explicit commandment in Scripture about family worship, the Bible clearly implies that God deserves to be worshiped daily in our homes by our families. Also, its practice is evident throughout the Bible.

ABRAHAM

Genesis 18:17–19

Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

MOSES

Deuteronomy 6:4–7

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

JOSHUA

Joshua 24:15

And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

JOB

Job 1:5

When the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them [that is, his sons and daughters], and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

ASAPH

Psalm 78

God "commanded . . . fathers" among his people (v. 5) to "tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord" (v. 4). The term glorious deeds is rendered "praises" or "praiseworthy deeds" in most other major translations. Asaph listed several examples of God's "praises" in the rest of Psalm 78.

PAUL

Ephesians 5:25–26

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”

As Christ cleansed his bride, the church, by the washing of the water of the Word of God, so husbands are exhorted here to love their wives in like manner. And one of the best ways that husbands can bring the pure water of the Word of God into their homes is through the spiritually cleansing and refreshing practice of family worship.

PETER

1 Peter 3:7

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

READING THE BIBLE

ELEMENT ONE: READING THE BIBLE

There are 3 elements to reading the Bible and you don't have to prepare anything before hand. They are:

- Read the bible
- Pray
- Sing

WE WILL FOCUS ON THE FIRST ELEMENT – READ THE BIBLE.

Chapter by chapter read through an entire book of the Bible.

If you have younger the children,

- You will want to read a narrative version that will help them understand.
- Read shorter sections.

As your children get older,

- Set a goal to read through the entire New Testament.
- And later the entire Bible.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE?

1. Read enthusiastically and interpretatively.
 - *Don't read apathetically as if reading a phone directory.*
 - *It is the Word of God, read it to the best of your ability.*
2. Explain words that children may not understand.
 - *Clarify the meaning of key verses.*
3. To improve their understanding.
 - Ask the children to choose a word or phrase to explain to you.
 - Then have them pick out for you a verse to explain to them.

It is that simple.

HERE ARE THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR FAMILY TONIGHT TO GET STARTED.

1. **READ:** Read a chapter aloud while sitting around the dinner table or right before the kids head to bed.
2. **Summarize:** Summarize the passage in your own words. Make sure to explain key words or concepts.

Example: If reading John 3 explain concepts like 'born again' etc.

3. **Share:** Ask everyone to pick a favorite verse that stood out to them most and why? Let them know at the beginning that you are going to ask this.

Remember, God deserves to be worshiped daily in *your* home by *your* family.

PRAY

ELEMENT TWO: PRAY

Leading your family in a short time of prayer, integrating both personal requests and petitions stemming from God's Word.

Previously, we looked at the most important element of family worship – reading the Word of God together.

Now we look at PRAYER.

This is the second most important element of family worship.

Whether prayer is offered by one member or everyone takes turns, the most important thing is that you pray together as a family. Each family may do it differently.

- Some people keep a prayer list.
- Some simply ask for a prayer request from family members.

Whatever your approach, pray about at least one thing you learned from the scripture passage you've just read.

USING BIBLE PASSAGES TO PROMPT PRAYER

Some families regardless of where they were reading in the Bible always go to the Book of Psalms when it is time to pray.

Turn the words of a few verses from either of these passages into a prayer.

If praying through Psalm 23 for instance:

- After reading through the first verse you may thank the Lord for being your shepherd.
- Ask Him to shepherd your family through certain events or family decisions and so forth.
- As you have time, continue through the passage line by line speaking to God of what comes to mind when reading the text.

By using this approach, you will not only pray for your family with a fresh perspective but you will also teach them through example, how to pray.

HERE ARE THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR FAMILY TONIGHT TO MAKE PRAYER A PART OF YOUR FAMILY WORSHIP.

1. As you read the passage, repeat everything you did in the first element- "Reading The Bible". As a reminder
 - *Be sure to read the passage aloud.*
 - *Be sure to explain any part that the children may not understand.*
 - *Briefly discuss what you all learned.*
2. Go around the room, asking each member to share any prayer request he or she may have.
3. Quickly scan the passage looking for something that prompts you to pray and that connects with the prayer requests.

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SING

ELEMENT THREE: SING

So far we have looked at two of the three crucial elements of family worship.

- Reading the Bible, and
- Praying together.

Initially things may not go as planned. Don't worry, sometimes it takes time.

Meanwhile, stay faithful by being at it.

If you haven't tried it with your family as yet, why don't you start tonight?

The last crucial element of family worship is singing.

Surprised?! Singing has been an important part of family worship through generations of Christians.

SINGING WITH THANKFULNESS

In Colossians 3, Paul encourages us to sing together to God with thankfulness in our hearts.

Singing is a great way to glorify God as a family. It reminds each other of His goodness and greatness.

We know from church history that ever since the times of the New Testament Christian families have worshiped God by signing together in their homes.

WHAT TO SING?

- Have a collection of chorus or hymn books or have them pull it up on their devices.
- Some people sing a different song each time.
- Some go sequentially from the beginning of the song book to the end.
- Some repeat a song for a week so that they can learn it.

With regards to music, some use recordings, some use family musicians, and some without accompaniments. The important thing is that you sing together and with joy.

For some, singing may be unfamiliar or awkward. Whatever be the situation, singing is a good way to worship God.

HERE ARE THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO TONIGHT TO ADD SINGING TO YOUR FAMILY WORSHIP.

1. Read through your regular daily reading passage. Repeat all that you learned previously in the first element. As a reminder
 - *Be sure to read the passage aloud.*
 - *Take time to explain any word that the children may not understand, and*
 - *Briefly discuss what you all learned.*
2. Pray together as a family. Remember
 - *to ask each family member if they have any prayer request.*
 - *Scan the passage you just read, to see if there is anything that prompts you to pray.*
3. Sing a song.
 - *Start with a favorite if you have one.*

- *Pick a song that is relevant to the theme of the passage.*
- *If someone plays an instrument have them play along.*
- *Otherwise sing acapella.*

Sing from your heart knowing that your Heavenly Father loves to hear you sing praises to Him.

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SUMMARY

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Three elements of family worship are

- *Reading the bible*
- *Praying, and*
- *Singing*

NO PREPARATION IS NEEDED.

There is no need to get a devotional ready. In fact, you don't have to "prepare" for family worship. Occasionally, you may share a blog post or an article that may convey a Biblical teaching. Alternatively, from time to time, you may relate a personal insight or experience that will encourage and build the other family member. Besides these, just keep to the three elements.

Read. Pray. Sing.

The famous British preacher Charles Spurgeon concurs that these three things should be the elements of family worship: *"I agree with Matthew Henry when he says, 'They that pray in the family do well; they that pray and read the Scriptures do better; but they that pray, and read, and sing do best of all.' There is a completeness in that kind of family worship which is much to be desired."*

HERE ARE THREE THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU MAKE FAMILY WORSHIP A PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE.

1. Be brief.

Otherwise the experience can become tedious. A good average time to read the Bible, pray, and sing is roughly 10 minutes, perhaps less if you have very small children. It is usually easy to lengthen the time if the occasion seems to be especially meaningful and family members are asking questions.

2. Be consistent.

Try to have a regular time each day for family worship. For some people it works best early in the morning before the family scatters. For others, the most convenient time is at the close of the evening meal. Another popular time for family worship is late in the evening or just before bedtime.

3. Be flexible.

Whatever time you choose, consider the wisdom of adapting a time when the family is already accustomed to being together, rather than trying to create another routine gathering during the day. Every family has to flex its worship time occasionally. Just be careful that your flexibility does not lead to inconsistency.

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RESOURCES

Here are additional tips for making family worship a regular part of your family's routine.

BOOK

The book, *Family Worship*, also includes chapters exploring what the Bible teaches about family worship, the history of family worship in the church, and a number of common "But what if?" questions, like "What if the father isn't a Christian?" and "What if there is a wide range of ages among the children?" The book also features a free discussion guide that you can use with your spouse or with a small group.

30 DAY SCHEDULE

This printable chart was designed to help you and your family develop a habit when it comes to family worship, and includes a suggested Bible reading, prompts for prayer, and a recommended hymn for each day.

<https://static.crossway.org/extra/familyworship101/30-day-schedule.pdf>



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