

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO FAMILY WORSHIP

The idea of family worship is both attractive and intimidating. The thought of beginning a new pattern of worship in the home can be overwhelming for those just beginning. This simple guide includes answers to basic questions that we hope will embolden and equip you to lead your family in worship in addition to your time in personal worship.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP?

The importance of the home in discipleship is prominent throughout the Bible (Deut. 6:6-7; Ps. 78:5-7; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Parents, especially fathers, are primarily responsible for the spiritual instruction and vitality of their families (Eph. 6:1-3). This task is great and weighty, but God's grace is greater, and the eternal rewards are beyond anything this world can offer.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY WORSHIP?

- Family worship brings glory to God. It is a visible reminder for all in the home that God is worthy of our time, attention, and affection.
- Family worship produces joy in the home. The joy Jesus brings to individuals He will bring to families who delight in His worship together. The love of Christ will more easily abound in a home where worship is central.
- Family worship affects change in the world. As families pray, study, and sing together, they join from their homes in what God is doing across the nations while affecting each other's lives for generations to come.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO DURING FAMILY WORSHIP?

Keep it simple. Consider including the following elements as you worship in your home:

- Read—Read a portion of God's Word together. Don't worry if you've already read it in personal time with the Lord; reading a chapter a second time will only reinforce what God is teaching you. If children are able to read, allow them to do so. Of course, you'll want to explain difficult words and concepts (but don't worry too much if you can't explain everything!). After reading the Word together, work through a simple process like HEAR (Highlight, Explain, Apply, Respond), much like you do in personal Bible reading. You might even share with your family what you learned in your personal Bible reading. Pick a Bible based devotional to follow if that will help you move along consistently.
- Pray—Consider voicing prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication (prayers for needs) together. You might even follow the acronym PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield). You can pray for things related to what you read together or for things that are pertinent to your family. You might even consider praying for those who have yet to hear about Jesus. Try to give every family member a chance to pray, even if on a rotating basis. Additionally, you may want to maintain a prayer journal that enables you to keep track of prayer requests and God's answers to those requests.
- Sing—Sing together as a family. If someone in the family has musical gifts, they may lead some simple songs. If no one in your family is musical, either use a recording (you can find them on YouTube or on most streaming music services) or just sing a cappella. If this is awkward in the beginning, start by playing praise songs or Christian radio as you travel in the car or cook in the kitchen so that everyone can learn some of the songs.
- Memorize—Whether a verse (or verses) is suggested or selected by a family member, work on it together. The beginning of the week may be spent both understanding and memorizing the verse(s). By the end of the week, allow everyone to repeat the verse(s). Review of verses may be carried out over the course of the year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP

1. What if the father is not a Christian?

The commands regarding family discipleship in the Bible assume a believing father in the home. Of course, this is not always the case. In those instances where the father is not a believer, the mother will need to assume this role. We encourage mothers to take this initiative with humility, kindness, and respect for the father in a home.

2. What about a single parent family?

Again, in this case the responsibility falls to the single parent. This is a heavy burden to bear in addition to many other duties but know that God will supply great grace and will more than make up for any natural deficiency we may perceive.

3. What if my kids are very young?

Having very young children will change the dynamic of family worship considerably. Remember, however, that the goal for every child in the family is not the same. With very young children, the goal is not understanding of all matters of doctrine. It is the goal of impressing upon them the importance of family worship and loving God.

4. How do I keep things interesting if I have children of different ages and different abilities?

For young children, try to include them as much as possible and appropriate. Of course, all members of the family can pray and sing (at least some songs). Allow younger children to read when possible. For older children, try including them in the teaching and application of the Scripture reading for the rest of the family and in the leadership of prayer and singing on occasion.

5. What if I have a child with special needs?

Having children with special needs participate in family worship is very possible! Depending on your child's abilities, make the family time play to their strengths; add in visuals, act out the Bible story, and don't worry if you need to make sections shorter for shorter attention spans.

6. What time of day is best for family worship?

The time of day is not the most critical element of family worship. Some families prefer to worship as the day begins. For others, the morning hours are simply too hectic for family worship. In these cases, evening may work best. Many families prefer to adjoin family worship to the evening meal since all the family may be present at that time. In short, timing is far less important than consistency.