

A Simple Guide to Family Worship

“Because the Christian is not his own, but bought with a price, he is to aim at glorifying God in every relation of life. No matter what station he occupies, or wherever he be, he is to serve as a witness for Christ. Next to the church of God, his own home should be the sphere of his most manifest devotedness unto Him. All its arrangements should bear the stamp of his heavenly calling. All its affairs should be so ordered that everyone entering it should feel ‘God is here!’” – A. W. Pink

The idea of family worship is at once both attractive and intimidating. Believers may hear encouraging testimonies of the benefits of family worship from others, but the thought of beginning a new pattern of worship in the home can be overwhelming for those just beginning. This guide is written to address some of the most basic questions concerning family worship. We pray that you will feel more emboldened and more equipped to lead your family in worship through using this guide.

What does the Bible say about Family Worship?

Family worship as we know it is not explicitly commanded in the Bible, but the importance of the home in discipleship is prominent throughout the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, fathers are commanded to teach their children throughout the day, even if that training is informal: (Deut. 6:6-7)

More formal instruction is evident in passages as Ps. 78:5-7. In the New Testament, fathers are given the command to bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Timothy a disciple of Paul was disciplined first by his mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois (2 Tim 1:5). In summary, family worship in the Bible is rooted in the idea of responsibility. Parents, especially fathers, are primarily responsible for the spiritual instruction and vitality of their families.

What are the Benefits of Family Worship?

Family worship brings glory to God. God is most glorified when His people value Him above all other things. Family worship is a visible reminder for all in the home that God is worthy of our time, attention, and affection. Furthermore, family worship glorifies God as His followers are conformed more and more into the image of Christ. The love of Christ will more easily abound in a home where worship is central. As one 19th century pastor noted, family worship will, “give true love toward those with whom we have to live: not an exacting, sensitive love, but a merciful love, which excuses and forgives, like that of God Himself; not a proud love, but a humble love, accompanied by a sense of one’s own faults and weakness; not a fickle love, but a love unchangeable.” That is the kind of love that produces lasting joy among husbands and wives, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters. Taking the longer view, think about the incredible value of family worship in the lives of children once they are grown. They’ve heard hundreds of passages read and explained, seen God answer countless prayers, sang so many songs of the faith and memorized more Scripture than many Christians do in a lifetime. This is a foundation that will stand the test of time and will bear gospel fruit in generations to come.

Who should Participate in Family Worship?

The participants are all who constitute a particular family. In other words, it may mean a young husband and wife without children, or an older couple whose children have already left home, singles, widows and widowers. It includes both believing and unbelieving spouses (as much as possible), and certainly family worship can be led by a single parent (Acts 16:1). It is to include all of the children who are at home regardless of their ages. All can derive great spiritual benefit, even the very young; this also helps to train our children to participate in our corporate gatherings of worship together. By just listening and watching, they are learning the priority of worship in their lives. Remember that the practice of family worship could blossom into the very instrument that brings them to Christ (2 Tim 3:15).

Key Elements of Family Worship

Worshipping with Scripture:

The Word of God is to be central in family worship. Our goal should be to help the members of our family to develop a love for God's Word with the hope that they will begin to live upon every word of it. Hold the standard high and God will bring them to it. Some ideas are: Direct reading from the Bible with a plan, use of a catechism, (a very successful method of teaching biblical truths by simple questions and answers), Scripture memory and review, reading Christian Classics together like *Pilgrim's Progress* (make sure your Bible is in front of you to explore the scriptural truths that will jump from every page!), and reading Christian biographies together are just some ideas.

Worshipping by Supplication:

We are to teach our children to pray not only by example from the very words we use in our prayers, but also by supplying them with the information to be prayed about. Pray often for the needs of your family and extended family (especially the unsaved), for the needs of families in your local congregation, the spiritual needs of our nation, the persecuted church, missionaries, and for the dire needs of a lost world (both locally and internationally). The list is endless. This illustrates to our children our dependence toward God in every aspect of our lives.

Worshipping in Song:

The Lord is to be worshipped in song. In family worship we should lead our family in singing to the Lord because He is pleased when we praise Him! The Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs which are often sung in the public worship services of your church should be sung. Another good idea is to conclude each family worship time together with singing the doxology or some other praise filled chorus. With all the media available today from CD's to mp3's and the online availability of music, your family's time of singing praises to the Lord does not have to be strictly *A cappella* ☺

Time of Day:

In a general sense, family worship should be going on all the time in a spiritually healthy home (Deut. 6:6-9). It is crucial to have a specific regular time, which fits each particular family's daily schedule. The key is to make it part of your family's daily schedule to show that family worship of the Lord together is a priority in the home.

Family Worship Example Day:

Morning: Reading of God's Word together and prayer to start the day.

Evening: Singing praises to the Lord, using the Westminster Shorter Catechism questions to teach biblical doctrine and family time of prayer together.

If you have any questions or need help or resources in getting started – please speak with one of the elders of the church. Please visit the church website at www.worshipatsgbc.org to find many links to resources in helping your family in their worship time.

Resources:

-Family Worship by Jerry Marcellino

-Guide to Family Worship by the Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, AL