

## **Family Worship Will Serve as a Training Ground for Smaller Children**

Personally, family worship forces us to teach our toddler to sit quietly for extended periods of time and to receive correction in a worship setting. For us, it has also borne much fruit as we see even our smallest children participate in corporate worship at church since the practice is no longer foreign to them. I will never forget the first time our youngest son, Elijah, recognized a song in the church that we had used several times at home. He was about thirteen months old at the time. The congregation began to sing, and he lit up like a Christmas tree! He began to flail his arms, and he smiled so big I thought he was going to pull a muscle in his face. It was an incredible moment.

Our little one is far from perfect. We still have to correct him in church, and he still gets distracted at times. However, he is able to make it through the service without major incident. In his world it's just a larger version of what he does at home every day. We have the privilege of being part of a family-integrated church, and it is amazing how quickly children adapt to being in the service when worship becomes a part of their lives.

Recently, Bridget and the kids were able to join me when I preached at a church in the Houston area. I love to take the family along with me whenever I can, so this was a treat for all of us. I had to preach three services that morning, so I knew it would be a test for little Elijah. When Bridget arrived, I was already at the church and in my seat. As she approached the sanctuary a young lady spotted her carrying the baby and made a beeline for her. The woman was polite and courteous. She smiled at Bridget and the kids and then said, "We have a nursery for the little one." Bridget smiled back and said, "Thank you, but we'll be fine."

The woman became a bit more assertive and informed Bridget, "The nursery is staffed by child-care professionals, and they have age-specific activities for the baby. I'm sure he will be fine." Bridget became a bit agitated and told the woman that Elijah sat through church every week and would not be a problem. Doubtlessly feeling that she had failed at her assignment (which was obviously to see to it that no babies or toddlers made it into the sanctuary), the woman moved aside and with a parting gesture said, "The nursery is right down that hall should you change your mind."

As it turns out, I used a closing illustration that day in which I told the amazing story of Elijah's adoption. When I was done, I pointed to him as he sat there in his mother's lap completely unnoticed until that very moment. Elijah sat through all three services that day, and at the end of each one of them young mothers approached my wife to compliment him and ask her what in the world she had done to get him to remain so quiet. Each time Bridget smiled and said, "He sits through family worship every day."

Excerpt from *Family Driven Faith* by Voddie Baucham Jr., pgs.146-147