

# FAMILY WORSHIP

## Selected Texts

So little family worship regularly exists in Christian homes, it is probable that even in *most* of our *best* churches, *most* of our *best* men do not lead their wives—and children if they have them—in family worship. Having your family in a good, Bible-teaching local church is crucial to Christian parenting. But it is not enough for conveying *your* faith to your children. Moreover, it is unlikely that exposure to the church once or twice a week will impress your children enough with the greatness and glory of God that they will want to pursue Him once they leave home. In this message I want to declare one main point: God deserves to be worshiped daily in our homes by our families.

### I. THE BIBLE CLEARLY IMPLIES THAT GOD DESERVES TO BE WORSHIPED DAILY IN OUR HOMES BY OUR FAMILIES

Genesis 18:17-19.  
Genesis 22:6-7.  
Deuteronomy 6:4-7.  
Joshua 24:15.  
Job 1:5.  
Psalm 78:1-8.  
Ephesians 5:25-26.  
Ephesians 6:4.  
1 Timothy 3:4-5.  
1 Peter 3:7.

### II. THE LIVES OF OUR CHRISTIAN HEROES TESTIFY THAT GOD DESERVES TO BE WORSHIPED DAILY IN OUR HOMES BY OUR FAMILIES

Christians in the early church.  
Tertullian.  
John Chrysostom  
Martin Luther.  
John Knox.  
The Presbyterians (Westminster Confession) and the Baptists (Second London Confession of 1689).  
Westminster Directory for Family Worship.  
The Puritans, particularly Richard Baxter  
Matthew Henry. Regarding family worship he said, “Here the reformation must begin.”  
Jonathan Edwards.  
Samuel Davies.  
J. W. Alexander. See his book, *Thoughts on Family Worship* (Soli Deo Gloria publishers)  
Charles Spurgeon.  
John G. Paton.  
Martyn Lloyd-Jones.  
Erroll Hulse.  
D.A. Carson.  
John Piper.  
“Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church” (Edwards). Part of church life is worship.

### III. EVERY CHRISTIAN FAMILY IS ABLE TO SHOW THAT GOD DESERVES TO BE WORSHIPED DAILY IN OUR HOMES BY OUR FAMILIES, AND HERE’S HOW:

A. **There are three elements to family worship: read the Bible, pray, and sing.** No material to “prepare.”

- **Read and explain the Bible.** The younger the children, the more you’ll want to use narrative passages and shorter sections. Read enthusiastically and interpretively, not apathetically.
- **Pray.** Pray about at least one thing suggested by the passage you have read. By doing so you not only pray for your family (and in fresh ways each time), but teach your family by example how to pray.
- **Sing.** Get songbooks for everyone and use them. Some sing a different song each night; some sing the same song for a week so they can learn it. Sing with (or as most do) without musical accompaniment.

- If time permits. . .
  - Catechizing
  - Scripture Memory
  - Other Reading. When time permits, you might start with some general reading, after which you begin family worship. Or, at the close of family worship, you might take advantage of the time together to read a Christian book or biography to your family.

#### **B. General reminders:**

- Brevity. Don't let the experience become tedious. You can always lengthen the time if asked.
- Regularity. Whether in the morning, at the evening meal, or before bedtime, have a set time.
- Flexibility. Every family has to flex its worship time sometime. But beware of inconsistency.

### **IV. BUT WHAT IF . . . ?**

#### **A. What if the father is not a Christian?**

The Bible gives no instruction in this case, and Christian moms have responded to this in various ways. Many unbelieving men are willing to read the Bible with their families—they only had to be asked.

#### **B. What if there is no father at home?**

Then the mother has the responsibility to raise the children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4), and this includes family worship.

#### **C. What if the children are very young?**

You exercise patience and discipline, and proceed with family worship. Part of the discipline may be to teach them to stay in certain place. But you'll begin to make lasting impressions upon them.

#### **D. What if there is a wide range of ages among the children?**

This is frequently the case, but has as many advantages as it has challenges. It can be done, for families have often been larger than ours today, and yet they were often more faithful in family worship.

#### **E. What if there are no children at home?**

Remember that 1 Peter 3:7 addresses husbands, not fathers, thus family worship is for couples, not just parents. The absence of children in the home does not justify the absence of family worship there.

Remember that there is no family worship situation that is unique, no situation that has not been addressed by Christians for centuries.

### **V. START TODAY**

The worthiness of God to receive your family's worship each day is reason enough to start practicing family worship today. But in addition to that:

- What better way exists to evangelize your children daily?
- What better way to provide an opportunity for children to ask about the things of God in a natural context?
- What better way for you to transmit *your* core beliefs to your children?
- What better way for your children to see the ongoing, positive spiritual example of their parents?
- What better way to provide reproducible examples to your children of how to have a Christian home?
- Isn't this what you really *want* to do?

Men, say to your wives: “I've come to believe that the Bible teaches that I should be leading us in family worship and I want to start today. I have a lot to learn about it, but I want to do what's right. Will you join me?”

Husbands, fathers—have the resolve of Jacob in Genesis 35:2-3.

Family members—have the willing spirit of Jacob's household in Genesis 35:4.

Single men—resolve to begin a time of worship with your fiancé from the night you become engaged.

Single women—resolve not to marry a man who will not pray with you and lead you in family worship.

Empty nesters—show your children by your family worship that you can still learn the things of God

Regardless of what anyone else does, let every father, let every Christian here commit himself to this: “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” in family worship.