

Family Matters: Why and How to Do Family Worship

"The latest figures I have seen from the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention report that 88% of church youth in the US leave the church once they finish high school" –**Alvin L. Reid**, *"Raising the Bar: Ministry to Students in the New Millennium."* (quoted in Donald Whitney, *Family Worship in the Bible, History, and in Your Home*, p. 1)

- There is no technique or practice (including these) that will guarantee that our children will love God. But we want to be faithful to put them in settings where they will hear the gospel, come to faith, and where that faith can be strengthened and trained.

Church History and Family Worship

- Luther, Bunyan, Baxter, Spurgeon, Pink, Paton ... they attribute their stability of faith to having parents who called them together for regular times of family worship.

[Matthew Henry's biographer writes] "Matthew's conduct in his family ... was in a great measure regulated by the example of his pious father, of whose house those who had access to it were ready to say, This is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. Matthew was constant in the worship of God in his family, morning and evening, which nothing was suffered to prevent ... He was never tedious ... performing much in a little time, which seldom exceeded half an hour.... When the whole was ended, his children came to him for his blessing, which he gave with solemnity and affection."
–quoted in **Donald Whitney**, *Family Worship in the Bible, History, and in Your Home*, p. 11

"Here the reformation must begin."

–**Matthew Henry**

"If we want to bring up a godly family, who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clods of the valley, let us seek to train them up in the fear of God by meeting together as a family for worship"
–**Charles Spurgeon**, quoted in Whitney, *Family Worship in the Bible, History, and in Your Home*, p. 13

The Biblical Call to Family Worship

"God has not left us to wander aimlessly in the wilderness as we raise our children. He has given us a blueprint for multigenerational faithfulness. That blueprint is expressed throughout the Bible, but there is one place where it reads like a how-to manual. That place is Deuteronomy 6."
–**Voddie Baucham**, *Family Driven Faith*, p.27

Deut 6:1-9

- At the threshold of the Promised Land (again), Moses wants to prepare them for the blessings and the tests that await them. He wants their faith continually strengthened and protected. So, he calls for a pattern of family worship.

"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise ... so that your days and the days ... of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers.... For if you will be careful to do all this... then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves."
(Deut 11:18-19, 21-23)

"Moses saw the home as the principal delivery system for the transmittal of God's truth from generation to generation. There is no hint here – or anywhere else in the Bible – of the multigenerational teaching of the truths of God being abdicated by parents in favor of 'trained professionals.' That is not to say that parents should reject any help. If I believed that, I wouldn't have written this book. However, we must be careful not to shift the responsibility for our children's biblical training onto anyone else."

-**Voddie Baucham**, *Family Driven Faith*, p.89

- Our kids have 'Jericho' in their hearts. What kind of leadership are we going to provide *now* to counter the attacks that this world is going to bring to their faith in coming years?

"And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel. And Joshua ... died at the age of 110 years. And they buried him. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel." **(Judges 2:7)**

Deut 6:20-25

- Judges 2 is, unfortunately, not ancient history. We're experiencing our own Judges 2 right here in the American evangelical church. 88% of evangelical church kids quit the church by the 2nd year of college.

"It all comes down to a simple question: Why are we here? Does our family exist to prepare children for the Major Leagues? If so, then baseball will be the center of our family's universe... Does our family exist to produce socialites? If so, then our family must revolve around the social calendars of our overloaded teenagers and their hectic schedules. However, if our family exists to glorify and honor God and to lay a biblical foundation in the lives of our children, then we must not allow anything to interfere with our commitment to family worship, prayer, and Bible study. [Arthur Pink writes] ... All our domestic comforts and temporal mercies issue from the lovingkindness of the Lord, and the best we can do in return is to gratefully acknowledge, together, His goodness to us as a family.... Of what avail will it be when we render an account to God for the stewardship of our families to say that we had not time available, working hard from morn till eve? The more pressing be our temporal duties, the greater our need of seeking spiritual succor [relief]. Nor may any Christian plead that he is not qualified for such a work: gifts and talents are developed by use and not by neglect."

-**Voddie Baucham**, *Family Driven Faith*, p.137-38

Doing Family Worship

➤ *Must wrestle against the calendar ... make this happen*

1. Learn About God

Use pre-packaged resources for study

A. *Training Hearts, Teaching Minds* (Starr Meade)

- This approach blends Bible readings and daily Bible studies with the Westminster Shorter Catechism (written in 1640s). (www.reformedmusic.com has songs to ease memorization)

Sample Q's from the book:

What is man's primary purpose?
What is God?
What is God's providence?
What is faith in Jesus Christ?
What is prayer?

- Kids look up verses that go along with the devotional reading for the day.
- While they're turning, may ask trivia questions (1st five books of OT? NT? Who wrote Galatians? Previous Westminster Question, etc.)
- Read the devotional (have kids read the related biblical passage)
- Possible follow up question. When finished, pray.

B. *Long Story Short* (Marty Machowski)

C. *The Family Worship Book* (Terry L. Johnson)

Read & study larger passages of Scripture

- Kids follow along in their Bibles if possible.
- Terry Johnson's book has some good helps for families who want to read through entire Bible. Don't freak out, it's not the Bible in a year plan. You take small bites for a few years.
- Before reading – might ask them to listen for few specifics
 - What does this story say about God?
 - About ourselves (or mankind)?
 - About God's plan to save?
- Possible follow-up question(s) ... into prayer

Take a Reading 'Field Trip'

- Take break from where we've been as a family...
 - Sproul's children's books, Big Picture Story, Jesus Storybook, Tale of Three Trees, Dangerous Journey, Chronicles of Narnia, Mr. Pipes (series), Pilgrim's Progress

2. Talk to God

- Usually ask every one to pray for one thing
 1. Prayer for close friends, extended family
 2. Neighbors and those who don't know Christ.
 3. Appropriate issues from LCC prayer chain
 4. Immediate family - anybody sick?
 5. Immediate family needs (finances, upcoming ministry)
 6. Church ministry and extended ministries
 7. Sing a song together

"Very specifically I would ask all parents: Do you have some kind of plan to impart to your children a knowledge of Scripture and a knowledge of its doctrine so that they will be able to stand firm in the hope of the gospel when they face grief and pain and pleasure and scoffing secularism? What in your life is more important than teaching your children the very Word of God? It will only take ten minutes to sing a verse or two of a hymn, read a portion of Scripture, draw out a lesson for life, ask a question from some good catechism, and have one or two pray. If you say you are too busy, I beg you to rethink your priorities. This is a commandment of God. And it will prove to be the source of much joy. A wise son makes a glad father, says the Lord, and it is the Word of God that makes a son wise."
-**John Piper**, "Educating for Hope"

"Your children may or may not be as enthusiastic, but that does not really matter. The less interested they are, the more your family needs family worship. The Lord will help you."
-**Donald Whitney**, *Family Worship in the Bible, History, and in Your Home*, p. 26

What We're Experiencing

1. Parents working to help children learn the Bible & learn how to talk to God. Unites us!
2. Children are seeing mom and dad open Scripture
3. Children learning how to pray and express themselves to God
4. Family experiencing the truth that God hears and answers our prayers.
5. Praying for them/giving thanks, by name, in front of them.
6. A family together in God's presence hearing from God, speaking to God.

The Wonderful Transfer: Commending God and Gospel to Our Children

Ps 44:1-8

- Where did he hear this rich theology of grace and power of God's saving arm?

FOLLOW UP MEETING – NEXT MONTH

-Gather the family tomorrow night for 5-10 minutes. Just start. You can hone it as you do it.