

first steps

HOW DO I DO DEVOTIONS WITH MY KIDS

*HOW TO LEAD YOUR
FAMILY THROUGH
FAMILY WORSHIP*

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Family Worship

"I trust there are none here present, who profess to be followers of Christ who do not also practice prayer in their families. We may have no positive commandment for it, but we believe that it is so much in accord with the genius and spirit of the gospel, and that it is so commended by the example of the saints, that the neglect thereof is a strange inconsistency."

Charles Spurgeon,

Family Worship: Abraham

When it comes to devotions and family worship there is no one perfect way of doing things. We all want someone to tell us what to do when to do it and how to do it. The difficulty with that is that every family is different. I do think every family should do family worship.

The explicit command to worship as a family is found nowhere in scripture the implicit understanding that family worship was vital is clear. One of the best examples is Abraham and Isaac. They brought everything to the top of Mt. Moriah except an animal for their sacrifice. This fact was not missed by Isaac (Gen. 22:7,8) he asked his dad where the lamb was for the sacrifice. Why? Because he had been to the family altar many times before. God graciously chose to reveal himself to Abraham. And he did so in part, we are told, "that [Abraham] may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord." When would Abraham have done this? He did not have others to rely upon. He could not turn for help, as we can, to the ministries of a local church. The only way Abraham could have

commanded his children to keep the way of the Lord was to teach the things of God at home.

(Whitney, Donald S. (2016-01-14). Family Worship: In the Bible, In History, and In Your Home (p. 18). Crossway.)

Family Worship: Jonathan Edwards

Family worship, Edwards felt, plays a crucial role in the spiritual vitality of the home and the church. Spiritual deadness, he said, can be traced directly to the lack thereof, for such robs “God of that honor he expects.” On the other hand, family worship strictly practiced honors God and adorns the family. Modern readers are not left without Edwards’s example when it comes to family worship. Samuel Hopkins helpfully described worship in the Edwards home as he observed it during his own stays there. On Saturday evenings, once the business of the day was complete and the distractions minimal, the Edwards family would gather together. There they would sing a song of worship, drawing upon the book of Psalms. Together the family would pray. “Care and exactness,” Hopkins noted, were applied to this “holy time,” as the Edwardses set the eyes of their hearts on the day of

worship ahead. For, in Edwards’s mind, the life of the “little church” touches upon the life of the big church, working together in God’s economy for the salvation of the saints.

(Raising a Spiritual Family with Jonathan Edwards. *Puritan Reformed Journal* Volume 2, 2(1), 347.)

Family Worship: Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry the famous commentator the the whole Bible, made one of the most remarkable of all statements on this subject.

Regarding family worship he said, **“Here the reformation must begin.”**

16 In other words, the reformation that we long for and pray for in our churches also involves the home. Since the church is comprised of family units— from singles to large families and everything in between — if the homes are changed through family worship, the church will be changed.

(Whitney, Donald S. (2016-01-14). Family Worship: In the Bible, In History, and In Your Home (p. 35). Crossway.)

How?

There is no perfect place, time or way to do family worship. Each family is unique as the persons who comprise it. There is thankfully common elements that are helpful and basic guidelines that would be of help to anyone who is trying to institute family worship into their home.

Bible Reading

There should always be a passage of scripture read the father or mother. After it is read the person who read it should take a few minutes to explain it to their kids. If this is too intimidating for you I would suggest getting a daily devotional that will help you understand portions of scripture so you learn how to expound scripture for your kids.

Singing of Songs

There are many options on youtube of songs you can sing. I like to use YouTube because the words are usually on the screen to aid in singing. I recommend that you choose a song that has deep theological truths as your kids will remember the words they sing far longer than the scripture you expound.

Prayer

Teaching your kids to pray is one of the most essential things that we can do as parents. We prepare them for collage by teaching them to do homework and complete assignments, but do we teach them to pray? Prayer is one of the most indispensable means of grace God gives us to connect with Him and to navigate the challenges we face in this life. Teaching prayer by modeling it to your kids, by instructing them on how to do it as well as giving them opportunity to practice it themselves is invaluable and must not be passed by.

Where? Where you do family worship (devotions) isn't the most important thing. It should be in a place where kids feel comfortable where they feel safe and are undistracted.

When? When you do it is really up to your family for some early in the morning works best. For other families it works best to do it after dinner. The time isn't as important as consistency. Pick a time and stick to it as life will enviably try to crowd out any space that you have selected.



Family
WORSHIP

Psalm 145:4

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Family worship should be:

1. Brief - "Let family worship be short, savory, simple, tender, heavenly." - Richard Cecil A good rule of thumb is 10min Bible Reading, 3 min signing, 2 minutes prayer
2. Consistency - Try not to skip and if you do don't go twice as long to make up for the missed day. Be consistent both frequency and length.
3. Hopeful Solemnity - Be reverential yet filled with hope and wonder.

For Scripture Reading:

1. Have a plan - Read 10 to 20 verses at a time. Don't just read from the New Testament read from the Old Testament as well.
2. Involve the family - Give each member a chance to read at different times.
3. Encourage private Bible reading and Study - Be sure that your kids learn to read the Bible on their own.

For Bible Instruction:

1. Be plain in meaning - Ask your kids if they understand what you are reading. Be plain in applying Scriptural texts.
2. Be pure in doctrine - Don't abandon doctrinal precision when teaching young children; aim for simplicity and soundness
3. Be relevant in application - Don't be afraid to talk about your experiences or to use concrete illustrations
4. Be affectionate in manner. - Love is one grand secret of successful training. Soul love is the soul of all love. J.C. Ryle
5. Require attention - Teach your kids to respect God and his word.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

For Prayer:

1. Be Short - Tedious prayers do more harm than good. Don't teach in your prayer.
2. Be simple without being shallow - Pray for things that your kids know something about.
3. Be direct - Ask God boldly and simply, plead your case and ask for mercy.
4. Be natural yet solemn - Speak clearly in your normal voice being careful to maintain reverence
5. Be varied - Don't pray the same thing every day. Remember to stress the various ingredients of true prayer: Invocation, adoration, and dependence.
6. Confess family sins - Confess the depravity of our nature, then actual sins committed - especially daily sins and family sins.
7. Ask for family mercies - Ask God to deliver us from sin and evil. Remember your families needs and intercede for family friends.
8. Practice Thankfulness - Thank the Lord for all the good gifts he gives. Heidelberg Catechism question 116 "God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them.

For Song Singing:

1. Sing doctrinally pure songs - There is no excuse for singing doctrinal error no matter how attractive the tune might be.
2. Sing psalms first and foremost without neglecting sound hymns
3. Sing simple psalms - particularly if you have kids that are young. Choose songs that express the spiritual needs of your children for repentance, faith and renewal of heart and life.
4. Sing heartily and with feeling - Meditate on the words you are singing. On occasion discuss a phrase that is sung.

(Practical Suggestions taken from Joel Beeke's book on Family Worship)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Family Worship](#) - Joel Beeke

[The Family Worship Book](#) -
Terry Johnson

[Family Worship](#) - Donald S.
Whitney

[Family Worship Bible Guide](#) -
Joel Beeke

[A Neglected Grace](#) - Jason
Helopoulos

