

FIELD GUIDE

Family Worship



CHRIST COVENANT

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Family Worship

INTRODUCTION

Every Christian family should be marked by love for Jesus, His Word (the Bible), His church, and His mission. Therefore, we desire the members of Christ Covenant to be committed to family worship.

What is Family Worship?

Family worship in the home is both a posture of worship toward the Lord and a particular activity for the whole family. Family worship (also called family devotional, Bible time, family time, etc.) is a regular and intentional family gathering to read God's Word, pray, and perhaps even sing together.

Time and Place

Finding a consistent time for the whole family to sit down together to read God's Word and pray can be difficult. Some families have family worship during breakfast, after dinner, before bed, or a combination of the three. Some families meet all together to read the Bible and pray just once a week, but the parents also

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intentionally meet with each child individually at different times throughout the week as well. Being consistent and intentional with whatever time or pattern you choose is what matters most. You will have to say *no* to some things in order to consistently say *yes* to family worship. Some families in our church keep their early morning plans clear so they can make family worship a priority; others have a couple of nights a week that they always guard to eat together and engage in family worship. Regularly pulling the whole family together is a great challenge and requires discipline. However, most of the great and meaningful things you do as a parent are hard and require discipline, and training your child to know and love Jesus, His Word, His church, and His mission is the most important thing you can do.

HOW TO DO FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Read

Reading God’s Word is an essential element of meaningful family worship. Of course we need to read the Bible in order to know and love God’s Word, but Bible study will also lead us to know and love Jesus, His church, and His mission more deeply.

See the appendix on Family Worship Resources for books and reading plans to help you and your family get started intentionally reading through Scripture. If you are new to reading the Bible as a family, we recommend narrative books (such as the book of Genesis or one of the four Gospels) or practical books (such as Proverbs or James).

2. Pray

Prayer is the active participation in our spiritual and physical dependence on God. Prayer should not be viewed as something you tack on to the beginning of a meal or the end of Bible reading. Rather, prayer should be viewed as it is biblically portrayed—intimate communion with the Father. Keep in mind that access to the Father in prayer is only possible when we are united to Christ by faith and indwelled by the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our weakness (Rom. 8:26). It's important for parents to model prayer for their child and then allow them the opportunity to also pray. Remind your child that they aren't praying to you; they are praying to God. While we can approach the throne of God with boldness because of Christ, we must always approach God in prayer with a sense of awe, wonder, and humility.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR PRAYER

Prayer Journal

One of the most humbling realities of prayer is that God hears and answers our prayers. During family worship, it's helpful to allow every family member to share prayer requests. Hearing a child's prayer requests gives parents a sneak peek into their child's heart. Write down the prayer requests and revisit the journal every time you gather as a family to reflect on how the Lord is working.

Praying Through Scripture

Using a passage of Scripture as a prayer guide is one of the most helpful prayer tools for both personal and family worship. The

basic premise of praying through Scripture is to read a verse of the Bible and use the words in that verse to guide your prayer. When praying through Scripture as a family, each person can participate by reading a verse and praying, one person after the other. Praying God's Word back to Him as a family is a beautiful, engaging, and edifying practice. See the appendix on Praying Through Scripture in the Personal Devotion Field Guide for more guidance.

3. Sing

Singing is a great way to affirm truth collectively as a family. Starting this rhythm can be a little awkward initially, but over time, singing together will become fun and encouraging for the faith of all family members. Parents can begin teaching songs at a very young age. Children will learn new songs as they grow and can begin using a songbook with the family.

Parents should explain the text of the song before everyone sings and then be intentional about singing the lyrics out (even if you don't think you have a good voice). The way parents model singing in the home will translate to how the family sings when the church gathers. It's helpful to sing songs from the worship service even if your child was at Covenant Kids and not in the main service. This will help them connect to the larger church family.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR SINGING

A Family Hymnal

We encourage every family to have a hymnal in the house that you can use as a tool to sing together. We recommend *Hymns of Grace* from Master's Seminary Press.

Christ Covenant on Spotify

The Christ Covenant worship team keeps a playlist of all our church's favorite worship songs on Spotify. This playlist is great to play just around the house or to use as a guide for singing.

BEST PRACTICES

One of the most challenging aspects of family worship is keeping children's attention. This can be difficult with both younger and older kids. Here are a few best practices to keep in mind as you establish your own pattern of family worship.

- Keep it short. Family worship time doesn't have to be long; even 10 minutes is a good start.
- Make it interactive and involve all family members. Ask older children to read passages of Scripture. Ask younger children to act out passages of Scripture or draw a picture of a biblical truth.
- Be intentional. Be intentional in establishing the rhythm of family worship in the home. Be intentional in taking advantage of "God moments" in life to point your child to truth. Be intentional about celebrating milestones (birthdays, graduations, etc.) in a way that points to God's provision and blessing.
- Remember Ephesians 6:4: "Do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

CONCLUSION

The Bible recognizes that there is a balance between disciplining children and exasperating or provoking children to anger. Children need discipline and will have to be corrected during family worship. With that said, parents will do well to encourage and engage their children during family worship. Family worship should not be a dread. If you are consistent and intentional, children will begin to enjoy the time together, and the truth and love of God will capture their hearts.

The secular world promotes successful parenting as being defined by what kind of grades children make or how good they are at sports or other extracurricular activities. However, Christian parents must remember that those things will matter very little in 10,000 years. What will matter then—and now—is whether or not children know and love Jesus, His Word, His church, and His mission. God has called parents to train their children diligently to this end (Deut. 6).

Please feel free to contact one of our pastors, elders, or Covenant Kids staff members for additional help with family worship. They truly desire to equip parents to effectively and lovingly disciple their families.





Appendix: Family Worship Resources

BOOKS FOR COUPLES

- Keller, T. & Keller, K. (2015). *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- Tripp, P. D. (2014). *New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional*. Crossway Books.

BOOKS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

- Helm, D. R. (2014). *The Big Picture Story Bible*. Crossway Books.
- Lloyd-Jones, S. (2007). *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name*. ZonderKidz.
- Machowski, M. (2010). *Long Story Short: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God*. New Growth Press.
- Machowski, M. (2012). *Old Story New: Ten-Minute Devotions to Draw Your Family to God*. New Growth Press.
- Machowski, M. (2011). *The Gospel Story Bible: Discovering Jesus in the Old and New Testaments*. New Growth Press.
- Murray, D. P. (2017). *Exploring the Bible: A Bible Reading Plan for Kids*. Crossway Books.

- Ware, B. A. (2009). *Big Truths for Young Hearts: Teaching and Learning the Greatness of God*. Crossway Books.

APPS AND WEB VIDEO

- Bible Project (bibleproject.com)
- YouVersion's Bible App (youversion.com)
- RightNow Media (rightnowmedia.org)







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