

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

FAMILY WORSHIP



BY WINFIELD BEVINS



GOSPEL CENTERED DISCIPLESHIP BOOKS

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To my girls

Kay, Elizabeth, and Anna Belle

INTRODUCTION

“Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church.”

-Jonathan Edwards

The fact that you are reading this means that you are interested in family worship. Perhaps you are even a little cautious as well. You're not alone. Evangelicals are beginning to rediscover the great blessing of family worship. Family worship is simply coming together as a family and worshipping God in the home. In the same way we come together for a time of corporate worship in the church, we also come together in the home for a time of family worship that involves prayer, reading scripture, and singing songs.

I admit that it may seem a little intimidating at first, but don't let it be. The key is to start small and finish big. It's worth it because your children really do want to know about God. The truth is your home is like a little church. Christian parents can lead their home in family worship. It's really not that hard. Teaching your kids about your faith and sharing in a time of family worship isn't just for trained theologians or pastors with kids. It's for all of us, including single parents, working parents, and parents who are new to the faith. Trust me, if my wife and I can do it, you can do it too.

I want to offer a brief introduction to family worship by a guy who wasn't raised in church or a tradition that practiced family worship. I have had to learn about it the hard way: trial and error. In fact, I am still learning about it and I don't have it all together. I have an amazing wife and two incredible little girls. I am also the pastor of a church with many young families with small children. Many of these young families are new to the faith and were not raised in church

themselves. One of my biggest challenges is helping them integrate their faith in the home.

Don't Leave it Up to the Church

Many Christians believe that it is the church's responsibility to raise their children in the faith. Too often, people think that the church is more like a baby-sitting service to watch our kids for a few hours a week. Nothing could be further from the truth. While church is important, the Bible tells us that the home is the primary place of learning the Bible and giving moral instruction. More than ever, it is time for us to step back and rethink the importance and value of worship in the home.

The call to "make disciples" begins in our homes first. It is our spiritual responsibility as parents, to teach our children about the faith. The Bible tells parents "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). As Christian parents, we should desire for our children to have a firm foundation and grow up to love Jesus and know what the Bible says about their lives.

The Bible tells us that the home is the primary place to learn the Bible and receive moral instruction. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, we read:

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

This passage offers us a paradigm for raising our children in the faith and being missional families. Faith is not just something that we do once a week, but should be incorporated into the daily routines of the home. We should have a

regular time to teach our faith to our children. We schedule what is most important to us. If you don't plan a time to teach your children, it will most likely not happen.

We should find moments to talk about our faith throughout the day with our families. How do we spend our time? Watching TV, playing video games, or shopping? Sadly, many families devote more time to these things than they do teaching their children about God, or just simply spending quality time together. There are teachable moments to share our faith with our children throughout each day. The problem is we are too busy to take advantage of them.

We should walk out our faith in the real world as an example to our children. The home is where faith learning begins, but the real world is where it is lived. Take time to stop and teach your children faith lessons in the car, at the grocery store, or the street corner. Christianity isn't just about knowing God, but living for Him. Children want a real faith that they connect to and live out.

Using This Study

This little book has been prepared as an introduction to family worship and to help you teach your children basic Christian beliefs and to memorize Scripture. This can be both fun and educational. The first section has short scriptures for you to learn with your children. The next section has longer passages such as the Ten Commandments and the 23rd Psalm. There is a sample Catechism for Boys and Girls with questions and answers that will help you learn basic Christian doctrine with your children. Lastly, there is a list of family prayers and songs that can be used at various times of the day.

Here are a few practical ideas that may help you use this study in the home.

1. Find a good children's Bible, such as *My First Bible*, *The Adventure Bible for Young readers*, or *the ESV Children's Bible*. Children love to have their own Bible that they can call their own.

2. Have a daily time for family worship (morning, afternoon, or evening). Develop a routine for your child. Consistency is good for learning. It will show your child that this is an important part of the day.
3. Remember to have fun with your children while learning the Bible. Memorizing and learning about the Bible doesn't have to be boring. Make the time fun and special.
4. Keep the time brief to hold the child's attention.
5. Recite a verse or question several times a day in your child's presence so it becomes familiar to them. It usually takes repeating something several times before you learn it.
6. You can make flash cards with Scripture on one side and the book, chapter, and verse on the other. Your child can carry them around with them.
7. Put the verse to music or to a rhythm. Your child will enjoy singing and clapping their hands.
8. Think of fun activities to make the verse fun and easy to remember. Be creative. Specialize your learning time in a way that is unique to you and your child.
9. Reward your child when he/she has accurately memorized a verse. Rewards could include small treats or prizes, a trip to the dollar store, or special time with mom or dad.

10. Tell them you are proud of them and have them recite it to someone else like a grandparent or teacher. Children love to share what they have learned.
11. Date each step as your child memorizes a scripture of one of the catechism questions. This will help you and your child chart their progress.
12. Pray with your children every day at meals and before they go to bed at night. Let prayer become an important part of your home.

Conclusion

I invite you and your family to discover the blessing of family worship. There is a revolution that is happening in the church today and it begins in the home. It starts in our marriages, by loving our spouses with the love of Christ. It happens by teaching, loving, and disciplining our children with the gospel. When we bring the gospel back in the home, it will spread through our neighborhoods and into the communities where we live. If every family in every church got serious about making disciples in the home, it would change our world. Begin the journey with your family today by using this little book as a guide to help you incorporate your faith into the daily routines of your family.

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

Learning the Bible is an essential to being a Christian. This section begins with simple Scriptures to memorize with small children and then progresses to offer more advanced passages for older group levels. This is also an ideal practice for parents to memorize along with your children as well.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Date_____

Psalm 118:24 This is the day the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Date_____

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Date_____

Psalm 136:1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

Date_____

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Date_____

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

Date_____

To purchase the book go to Lulu.com.