



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

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THE BIBLICAL ELEMENTS OF FAMILY WORSHIP

Introduction

Family worship is often neglected in covenant homes in the midst of a busy working schedule especially in hectic Singapore. The Bible teaches that Christian men who head households should be spiritual leaders in their families. The principal means for this leadership has been in domestic gatherings called "family worship", "family devotions", or "the family altar". This practice was once widespread in the homes of members of Protestant and reformed churches; however, today few Christians are familiar with this exercise of spiritual nurture by fathers and husbands. One may ask, What exactly is required of men who want to begin family worship? We shall consider the following elements of family worship.

The *purposes* of Family Worship are:

- To *promote* family unity and godliness.
- To *instruct* the family in Christ's *truth* in His Word and to grow together in *faith*.
- To *encourage* effective communication and sharing within the family.
- To *pray*, share and rejoice together in the study of God's Word.
- To *integrate* biblical principles learned at church with school and home life and to enable us and our children to live our faith in a practical manner.

Basic Elements of Worship: Those elements of worship that are appropriate for congregational worship are not necessarily meant to be used in the home. Consider the Biblical texts that touch on spiritual nurture in the home and two elements are unmistakably mentioned: 1) **use of the Word of God**; and 2) **leadership by the father/husband** (Genesis 18:19; 31:1-16; 35:1-4; Genesis 48-49; Exodus 12:1-28; 13:1-16; Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6; 11:18-21; 32:45-46; Joshua 24:14-15; Psalm 78:1-8; Proverbs 4:1-4; 1 Corinthians 14:35;...

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Ephesians 5:22-6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12). With the support of the spouse and the children.

Some family worship use written devotions from good Christian books that are biblically relevant for men to spiritually lead their families. Include also the setting aside a place, choosing an appropriate time and have in the right spirit and atmosphere in communicating God's Word to them and at a regular frequency. Abraham has a wonderful testimony in Genesis 18:19 says, *"For I know him, that he will **command his children and his household** after him, and they shall **keep the way of the LORD**, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."*

Leadership of the Husband/Father: There can be no worship without order. Someone must call the participants together and preside in worship. In the family God has given this leadership to husbands and fathers. Indeed, men cannot be truly Christian husbands and fathers unless they spiritually lead their families in this vital aspect of family life. Paul says in Ephesians 5:23-26, *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"*.

The head of the house must call the members of the household together including domestic help if any, no matter how busy we or the children are with their Co-Curricular Activities or studies or leisure (Genesis 17:23; 18:19; 31:4; 35:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:4). This is the first test of his authority within the family. People are pulled in many directions in homes today and many families do not even pray, share and eat meals together. Choose a time which is convenient for your family. In family worship we can gather together either in the morning before the daily routines begin (ie going to work or school). Or in the evening after dinner and have Bible study, prayer and sharing together for about 20-30 minutes or so with our spouse and the children before they go to bed (ie 9.30 pm).

There is no set time or frequency given for family worship in the Bible. Some have found a daily pattern (or some have it once in two days) as suggested in Deuteronomy 6:7; however, the same passage could be cited for a more frequent observance. Psalm 92:2 seems to describe daily devotions, morning and evening. Other Christians point to the twice daily offerings which pertain to the Tabernacle (Exodus 29:38-42). The general lesson from Scripture is that devotions should be regular, ie daily. This principle may be applied to family worship.

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If the father is absent (ie overseas) the wife may also lead in family devotion with the children. Family worship is not a ritual but a joyful reality of communion with God as a covenant family. The instruction in congregational worship, personal Bible reading and prayer are important to meet the spiritual needs of the members of the family. The leadership of a husband or father in the home is necessary for an edifying exercise to build up its members in the fear of God.

The husband/father must maintain order once all are gathered. This will be the second test of his authority. Disrespect or indifference must be corrected and attention to spiritual things must be focused (Ephesians 5:22-24; 6:1). The Christian husband must be the leader even if the wife has greater knowledge of the Bible, she may contribute her comments in support of her husband's leadership in the home.

The Reading of Scripture: The reading and discussion of the word of God is the second element required for Biblical spiritual leadership in the family. It is good to read through the Bible and or follow reading plans that systematically in the whole of the Scripture (Psalm 119:105). Devotionals also may be used by the husband/father and together with God's words as well. The Holy Spirit uniquely works through the Scripture as a means of grace. Read from the KJV version (if you are using the English language), explain the text or important Biblical words to the children and give its meaning and its application relevance is important there (Nehemiah 8:8).

If the whole family is gathered together, the leadership of the husband/ father lies in being the one who reads the Bible aloud. Bible reading should be followed by discussion in which any member of the family may ask questions and make comments for application and learning (Genesis 31:14-16; Deuteronomy 6:20-25; 1 Corinthians 14:35). The comments should not become teaching, for the head of the family should be the teacher and explain the word clearly.

Wives can play an important role in their edifying comments and prayers in family worship. A Christian husband should not underestimate the priority of spiritually nurturing his wife. Scripture treats such "washing of water by the word" as the mark of a Christian husband's love for his wife (Ephesians 5:26). The one-flesh relationship of marriage is the principal metaphor in the Bible for expressing the spiritual union of Christ and the church.

Individual Bible study with the children also will enhance the ability of the father to be a nurturer sensitive to each individual needs of his family (Ephesians 6:4). **A Christian father should not be an austere and distant authority...**

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figure but a caring and understanding spiritual guardian sent from God. Bible study with each child, if possible, better reflects our heavenly Father's personal involvement with each of us, His children adopted in Christ and cared by Him. Remember the good testimony of Job in Job 1:5 says, "*And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*"

Family Prayer: corporate family prayer is absolutely vital to the spiritual health of the home. While we have examples of heads of families praying for their families, we also have the husband or father to lead the family in prayer. The Biblical examples of men leading a congregation in prayer are meaningful as well.

In summary, consider the following:

1. *Start promptly at the designated time.* Have everyone gather in one room, each bringing their own Bible.
2. *Open with prayer.* For the opening, it is usually best for *one person* to pray first (usually Dad or Mum).
3. *Share the reading of the Scripture lesson.* Either one person or everyone can take turns among all those who are able to read. A pre-reading (3-6 years old) child can participate by describing the pictures in his children's Bible. The head of the house should then explain the meaning of the scripture text with application.
4. *Discuss the relevance of the passage to your lives today.* This can be facilitated by Dad and Mom asking thought-provoking questions. Encourage everyone to participate.
5. *Spend some time learning together.* Discuss an issue happening at school, a current event, or a good book or a contemporary issue (ie homosexual, R21 movies or casino or Golden Compass or Harry Potter).
6. *Have a time of open and meaningful sharing and communications.* Share family matters, and discuss any conflicts. Family members should share any specific prayer requests they may have. Encourage everyone to participate. You will be amazed at what you learn about your children! Being open with them on sharing offers a good example and encourages them to be honest with you. This is an appropriate time to discuss family and individual goals, church life, personal plans and problems.

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7. *Pray and worship together as a family.* Each person can pray in turn or spontaneously. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate. Kneeling is meaningful though not compulsory. You may wish to close with hymns of praise and worship and prayer again. Singing in worship to God together creates a special bond in the family.

Conclusion

Family worship is a pivotal aspect of the spiritual vitality of the covenant home and is not to be neglected. It requires God given discipline and the spiritual leadership of the man of the house and commitment to seek and honour God first. God will bless and prosper those who remember Him and give guidance and protection to the Christ-centred family. Let us seek the Lord as a family together daily in corporate prayer, Sabbath worship and the meditation of His Word to the spiritual growth of every member of the household.

Rev Jack & Mrs Angelina Sin
(Edited and expanded from '*Family Worship*' by Kerry Ptacek)

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Happy The Home

Happy the home when God is there,
And love fills every breast:
When one their wish, one their prayer,
And one their heavenly rest.

Happy the home when Jesus' name
Is sweet to every ear;
Where children early lisp His fame
And parents hold Him dear.

Happy the home where prayer is heard,
And praise is wont to rise;
Where parents love the sacred Word,
And live but for the skies.

Lord, let us in our homes agree,
This blessed home to gain;
Unite our hearts in love to thee,
And love to all will reign.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

CHURCH THEME: WALK IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4)

Our **worship services** begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm**.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	<i>Today: 25/11/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 02/12/2007</i>	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Dr David Allen	
<i>Message:</i>	What if I Refuse to Do?	Tbd	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Text:</i>	1 Corinthians 9:16	Tbd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December Family Worship: The combined YAF meeting and family worship will be held on 7 December at the home of Hubert Wee. For those who would attend, please contact Pr Mok or Hubert. • Lord's Supper: Next week, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with your hearts prepared. • Result of the 3rd Quarter Memory Verse Review Exercise: Congratulation to those who have scored more than 90%. They are: Anthony Poh & Wang Chin Kiong. • Sabbath School: Please note that class is held at the Library after the morning worship. All children are encouraged to sit with their parents during the main service. • Those serving on the Lord's Day for both morning and evening worship services: Please gather behind the pulpit area at 10.30am for prayer. • Memory Verse for the Previous Week (Nov 07 Wk 3): Mark 5:19 – "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."
<i>Organist:</i>	Joy	Anthony	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	John Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Dr David Allen	
<i>Message:</i>	Priest of the Order of Melchizedek	Tbd	
<i>Text:</i>	Genesis 14:18-20	Tbd	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Hubert	Grace	
Other Duties			
	<i>Today: 25/11/2007</i>	<i>Next Week: 02/12/2007</i>	
<i>Ushers</i>	Josiah/Evelyn	Daniel/Joyce	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Joyce	Carol	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Volunteers	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	DHW - Genesis	DHW - Genesis	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 30 Nov	7:30 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Bible Study	
Sat 1 Dec	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Pr Mok	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £275.10		Lunch: £37.00	
<u>Memory Verse</u>			
<i>This Week (Nov 07 Wk 4): Ezekiel 33:7-8</i>			
<p>So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.</p>			