

The Devotional Life of the Family

Sabbath Afternoon

“We will not hide them from their children; telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” Psalm 78:4.

“You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Deuteronomy 11:19.

The Purpose of Family Worship

- To teach children about God and how to reverence Him.
- To teach children that the Bible is God’s will for their lives.
- To show the benefits of obedience and the consequences of disobedience to God’s law.
- To bring to life the Bible characters as role models for the children.
- To teach children about the ministry of angels.
- To open to the children the plan of salvation through the life and death of Jesus.
- To bring the family closer together.
- To prepare children to sit still and be quiet in church.
- To encourage the habit of personal Bible study, such as the Sabbath school lesson.

Applying the Principle

1. If you are not in the habit of having regular family worship, call a family council to discuss the possibility the next time you are together.
2. Fix a specific time. The ‘best time’ is when everyone can be present.

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Sunday

Family worship should be like a good family meal. Here are some features for family meals which apply equally well to times of family worship:

Organization

- Family meals are planned for times when everyone can be present.
- The aim is to prepare a meal that the whole family will enjoy.

Preparation

- A number of people can be involved in planning the menu.
- Children as well as adults can help to prepare some parts of the meal.

Menu

- The main course is something which nearly everyone will like, with a variety of other dishes that will appeal specifically to different members of the family.
- Special provision is made for babies, and everyone else for whom the main course is not suitable.
- A surprise or two is especially appreciated, particularly by the children.

Conversation

- The emphasis is on interaction between the ages—no one group should dominate the attention.
- Family meals are good times to “catch up” with one another and build relationships.

Attitude

- A family meal that has gone well and has been appreciated by everyone present is a great joy.

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Monday

The Importance of Family Worship. If ever there were a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Infidelity and skepticism prevail, iniquity abounds, corruption flows in the vital currents of the soul, and rebellion against God breaks out in the life. Enslaved by sin, the moral powers are under the tyranny of Satan. The soul is made the sport of his temptations; and unless some mighty arm is stretched out to rescue him, man goes where the arch-rebel leads the way. Child Guidance, 517.

Try Varied Reading Materials in Worship

1. Read a continuous story suitable for those age levels present.
2. Have a special story book for tiny tots to read during their “corner” of the worship time.
3. Read a story in the Bible. Have someone take the part of the narrator, and each person read the verses pertaining to his character.
4. Read the week’s Sabbath school lesson, taking turns with each age group.

Make Singing a Part of Worship

1. Play a sing-along CD or tape for worship.
2. Learn a new song once a month.
3. Don’t hesitate to teach children hymns.

Focus on Family Needs in Worship

1. Write appreciation notes to family members.
2. Ask for forgiveness for specific mistakes of the day.
3. Prepare a “thankful list” with each family member contributing.

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Tuesday

Let There Be Households of Prayer. Like the patriarchs of old, those who profess to love God should erect an altar to the Lord wherever they pitch their tent. . . . Fathers and mothers should often lift up their hearts to God in humble supplication for themselves and their children. Let the father, as priest of the household, lay upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. In such a household Jesus will love to tarry. Child Guidance, 518.

Use Special Props and Visual Aids in Worship

- Use nature items for spiritual object lessons.
- Have a Bible quiz.
- Act out a Bible story.
- Look at family videos, slides, films, or pictures, and recall God’s leading in the past.
- Set an extra plate at the table and invite the Heavenly Guest to worship with the family.

Have Worship in a Different Setting

1. Conduct worship in different family members’ bedrooms.
2. Experience a candlelight or fireplace worship on Friday nights.
3. Make a worship corner in your home, with devotional books, Bibles, paper, pencils, crayons, and Spirit of Prophecy books available.
4. Have sunrise worship out in nature where the family can praise God. Then have an outdoor breakfast at a campfire.
5. Worship with an invalid friend of the family.

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Wednesday

Worship Suggestions for Older Teens and Young Adults.

The following is a list of ideas to engage the interest of older teens and young adults. These ideas can be adapted to other themes and topics.

1. Let each member of the family take five minutes to decide how they will answer a question; e.g., What is the first thing you want to do when you get to heaven? Share ideas.
2. Discuss ways you can be kind at home, at school, and at work. Tomorrow at worship report on a random act of kindness that each one did.
3. Read one chapter of Proverbs each day (there are 31 chapters!). Discuss what message Solomon has for teens and young adults.
4. Let each member of the family be prepared to tell something about how their favorite hymn was written and why they like it (hint: Google knows everything!).
5. Discuss with the family members practical ways to share your faith with your classmates, teachers, and friends.
6. Find five texts from the Bible that you could show to someone who asks you what happens to a person when they die (try the same thing with the other beliefs of our Church).
7. Read a chapter from the book, Messages to Young People and discuss how it can fit your family and your life.
8. Read Romans 8:28, which says that all things work together for good. Make a list of three of the greatest temptations to a young person and find a text in the Bible that will help them to resist these temptations.
9. Take turns “teaching” the Sabbath school lesson to the rest of the family.

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Thursday

Worship Ideas for Singles. “For your Maker is your husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.” Isaiah 54:5, NKJ.

Do not allow the vexations of your business to bring darkness into your home life. ... In the daily life you will meet with sudden surprises, disappointments, and temptations. ... Look unto Jesus at all times and in all places, offering a silent prayer from a sincere heart that you may know how to do His will. Adventist Home, 214.

Make the Worship Period Interesting

1. Invite a family to join you for your worship.
2. Visit an invalid’s home or a nursing home and have worship with someone there.
3. Have a fellowship group join you in your home once a week for spiritual growth.
4. Invite children in the neighborhood to your home for stories, Bible reading, and songs once a week.
5. Visit your parents once a week, if nearby, and share worship with them.
6. Have worship with a roommate, boyfriend, or girlfriend.
7. Find a prayer partner for a daily prayer and Bible study.
8. Go to special places to worship God, such as a forest, a riverside, a garden, or a park.
9. Get a family-cluster organized with several families and singles from the church. Meet once a week for spiritual growth, social activities, and outreach ministry.
10. Read books on personal devotions and experiment with new spiritual skills. Then share with others what you’ve learned.

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Friday

The Need for Family Prayer. “Gather the people to Me and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.” Deuteronomy 4:10.

Every family should rear its altar of prayer, realizing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If any persons in the world need the strength and encouragement that religion gives, it is those who are responsible for the education and training of children. . . . Fathers, mothers, you need to seek God morning and evening at the family altar, that you may learn how to teach your children wisely, tenderly, lovingly. Child Guidance, 517.

Important Components of Family Worship

1. The hours of morning and evening worship should be the sweetest and most helpful of the day.
2. Invite into the home the presence of holy angels.
3. Let the service be brief and full of life.
4. Let the service be adapted to the occasion.
5. Let the service be varied from time to time.
6. Let all join in the Bible reading.
7. Learn and often repeat God’s law.
8. Let children select the Bible reading texts.
9. Question children on the Bible readings
10. Let children ask questions.
11. Let little ones join in songs and take part in prayer.

–Taken from Education by Ellen G. White, pp. 186, 187.

