

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

One out of ten fundamental Christian families regularly has a time of daily Bible reading and prayer together.

Christianity Today found that dads spend 3 minutes/day with their children and 37 seconds with an infant.

Without a doubt, there is more guilt amassed on the consciences of Christian parents regarding their failure on this issue than hardly anything else.

Study on 3 major denominations: **Biggest felt problem...**having Family Devotions and feelings of guilt because of not having them.

We are not committed to them...our parents were committed and had convictions...we just believe in them.

Convictions...Commitment...Belief...Opinion

There are not very many positive models of how to have Family Devotions

Average # of days is 7-10 days that commitment to Family Devotions last.

Family Devotions is devoting and expressing faith, praise, love and devotion to God.

Make them exciting and something looked forward too.

Wisdom – seeing things from God’s point of view, the value system that makes this world work.

Lack of real belief in value in spending time in the Word
What is important to a person they make a commitment to do.

Family Devotions is not what we really feel/think/believe is important

We always do what we want to do.
Train up a child in the way he should go

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” Deut. 6:6-9.

“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!” Duet 5:29

That promise is as pertinent to us as to Israel.

Those who teach diligently His precious Word have a right to these promises.

It is a way to guarantee that you have godly children, good citizens.

The way to a real Christian home must include, as a major factor, teaching diligently the Word of God to the children and enforcing its commands.

Christian families in America would be rearing presidents, senators, governors, university presidents and professors and preachers of great churches.

If America is to be saved it must be by Christian homes where God can mold the lives of the people through the Word of God and Christian discipline and teaching.

Delighting in the Scriptures the Key to Prosperity

Loving and obeying the Scriptures while avoiding evil men is the secret of perfect success for the individual, as we learn in Psalm 1:1-3:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

What a wonderful promise! Prosperity in everything one lays his hand to, if he avoids evil company and meditates day and night in the Word of God!

The same precious truth was given Joshua:

"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."— Josh. 1:5-8.

The family that delights in the Word of God, loves it, teaches it to the children, meditates in it - that family will be prospered, the children will turn out to be moral, godly, good citizens, happy, successful Christians, the Scripture says.

The Home Is the Only Place Where the Bible Can Be Taught as It Ought to Be

The one place where the Bible can be fully taught daily and adequately is in the home.

But what hypocrisy it is for Christian people to indignantly blame the action of the Supreme Court about no Bible reading and no prayer in the schools when they do not have it at home! There is no law to prevent you from praying with your children. There is no law to prevent you from reading the Bible in your home and teaching your children the Bible. And it is a poor kind of escapism to blame the courts for forbidding Bible teaching in the schools, when you do not sincerely care enough about it to have it in your own home. —JRR

But God intends that fathers and mothers shall win their own children, shall teach their children, shall worship with their children.

Worship in a home is normal Christianity.

“Family Worship” THE HOME – Courtship, Marriage, and Children by J.R.Rice

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh. 24:15.

"Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."-I Cor. 16:19.

". . . Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." Col. 4:15.

". . . to the church in thy house." Philem. 2.

"The church in thy house"! What a simple picture of worship in a home!

There are fully as many reasons for family worship as there are for public services in a church building.

Christians are encouraged to agree together in prayer.

There ought to be Bible reading and prayer and exhortation and singing in the home.

I have my own family for which I am accountable to God.

BUT IT IS THE COMMANDMENTS GOD EMPHASIZES HERE

The home that establishes a family altar, then, must set out to stress the *commandments* of God, what a righteous and holy God requires.

That Means That in the Home, Parents Must Emphasize the "Thou Shalt Nots"

It Necessarily Follows That God's Authority in the Home Rests in the Parents
and They Must Enforce His Rules

"TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY"

So says the Word of God. These are strong words.

Give the Word of God Daily Priority in the Home

One who takes seriously the instruction in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 must be impressed that the Bible is not simply one item of many, is not a minor matter and not only a major one, but it is a controlling factor of the whole life of a home.

A devoted love of the Bible so that one memorizes much of it, is here commanded.

Every problem that comes up in the home will be dealt with in the light of the Scriptures.

Christian Homes, Then, Should See That the Bible Is Read Not Only by

Individual Members but Publicly as a Group to Learn, Memorize, to Comment.

Then if we take to heart God's commands about the home, parents must supervise their children in memorizing portions of Scripture.

To teach the Scriptures "diligently" means to memorize, to drill, to enforce the Scriptures.

How To Have a Family Altar?

Any serious effort to teach children the Bible and to be good Christians means a regular scheduled time, part of the family program every day.

Know what Family Devotions are: 5 parts

A. Regular & scheduled activity

It has to be scheduled. 85% of our whole life is scheduled

This time must be religiously kept.

Daily unvarying schedule.

Character is not made up of holy vows and aspirations. It is made up of habits following those vows.

- B. With the majority of the family
- C. Interacting meaningfully - discussion with family
- D. Around the Bible on relevant life situations
- E. It has a goal
 - i. Building Godly character
 - ii. Habits...what you do

The family has passed off the training of values to nothing except 1 hour of Sunday School/week.

The Christian school is not enough...look at the kids that don't turn out that go to Christian school.

We are not seeing the average child graduating from Christian school is not turned on toward God.

Family worship should be early in the day

The Lord says, "Those that seek me early shall find me" (Proverbs 8:17).

The mealtime is probably best for the worship period

It seems to me that right after breakfast is the ideal time, in most homes.

The whole family should worship together

All in the family should take part

Appoint one family member to lead in worship each day and select the passage to read. This one may appoint others to help in the family worship.

Every member of the family should feel that it is his duty to be present and to take part.

Family worship should certainly include the reading of the Bible.

One verse of Scripture is not enough for a time of worship.

How should Bible reading be done?

Best to read in succession around the table.

Start the reading of the Scriptures, reading two verses. Then the child on the left reads two verses, and so on all around the table, and around the second time and third time, if necessary.

After reading the passage, have each member in the family explain one verse or one paragraph.

After the Bible reading, have each member tell what this verse means or how it can be applied to personal life.

Make up Bible games by having each member make up questions to try to stump the others.

Incidentally, family worship period is one of the strongest reasons why children will love to read and read well and intelligently and read mature and helpful books.

I do not believe that any way, is as good as having the Bible itself, and reading from the Bible.

Enjoy the Bible.

Certainly the family worship should include prayer.

All those in the home who are Christians ought to pray.

Pray in a circle around the table.

And the family altar is a time also to praise good deeds, to rebuke quarrels, to settle problems.

How long will devotions take?

Often not more than fifteen or twenty minutes; but what a precious time together!

In Jesus' Name, Start Today!

Suggestion: Husband and wife talk it over and fully agree.

Start with reading one chapter.

The head of the family must simply stand up and require everybody to be present, everybody to take part. That kind of Family Devotions requires family authority in the home.

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17

If you know to do it and don't do it ...it is SIN.

Some Problems of Family Worship

Do not think that it will be easy to maintain daily family worship.

Much of the happiness of a home is lost when the family does not meet together frequently as a unit.

Satan will make a special attempt to break down the family altar and stop the daily season of worship in the home.

I think the head of the home must lead out in family worship.

He/She had better remember that the eternal welfare of one of these little ones committed to him or her is worth more than anything.

The family altar that becomes secondary to the other interests of the father or mother or children will not last long but will be abandoned.

The worship period should not be too long, not long enough to become a tiresome bore.

It should not be long enough to lose the interest and attention.

7 Big Reasons People don't have Family Devotions

1. "Perceived lack of time & energy"

2. "My children don't want them"

Question your commitment to what you are trying to do.

Don't allow expectations and/or objections to stop you

Incorrect expectation that child is going to want your same values (chores)

3. "Spouse does not want them"

Read something once a week – take baby steps – be consistent

- a. Read exciting Missionary biography, Chronicles of Narnia
- b. Have them later in the evening before the kids go to bed

4. "My children's ages are too varied"

- a. Different times for different ages
- b. Different time for parents
- c. Teach the older kids to be selfless and give a little to the younger

5. "We've tried it before and failed a dozen times" – snow job...lack of commitment (playing tennis, biking – commitment to tennis, TV is greater than Family Devotions)

- a. Forget the failures and start again – restarts are a part of life
- b. **You will get off schedule...how long will you allow yourself to be off schedule?**
- c. Family Devotions is an easy skill to develop...false expectation
- d. Be willing to have some downers
- e. It's going to be simple to have Family Devotions in our busy schedule...false expectation!

6. "I don't know the Bible well enough to have Family Devotions"

- a. No one is telling anyone how to have Family Devotions
- b. Give Family Devotions a place of honor, dignity, and respect
- c. Guilt should come when we break a command of Scripture
 - i. Give them a tool to use
 - ii. Different principle every day – touch their felt need every day

7. "I don't know what to teach or say"

Demonstrates a lack of commitment

- a. Dobson - Material only on David, Samson, Christ – Same over, over, and over. Bored with same story over and over
- b. Teaching to head knowledge rather than Life Change

Make time every day for at least a chapter of God's Word and for a complete circle of prayer on all ordinary occasions.

The family altar and Bible study will bind the family together, eliminate juvenile delinquency, foster deeper love, and enable each member to become a stronger, better Christian.

Everything we need to know He knows...we have direct insight into all the answers through His Word.

PRAYER: Father, forgive us and help us to commit to changing this area of Family Devotions.

Date _____

Dear Pastor:

Today we have decided to definitely now commit ourselves that we will undertake to have a daily time of Family Devotions, reading the Bible, reading the Bible In Stories, or reading a Biblically based Family Devotional resource - at least a chapter or story each day with the whole family and have a time of prayer with the whole family.

Time preferred _____ Number of children in the family _____

With what book in the Bible or Biblical Family Devotional book are you beginning the daily reading together? _____

Signed: Husband _____ Wife _____

Children _____

Address _____

Family Bible Study

Excerpt from "How To Study The Bible"

By Donald E. Hoke

The Open Bible, Expanded Edition © 1985 by Thomas Nelson, Inc

The Home--Courtship, Marriage and Children

(Dr. John R. Rice) \$3.95 PB3599

God in Your Family

(Dr. John R. Rice) \$5.95 PB3041

Effective Family Devotions I-II

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY Broadcast CD \$9.00 B00405D