

HOW TO HAVE A FAMILY WORSHIP EXPERIENCE AT HOME



How to Have a Family Worship Experience at Home

By Jana Magruder (Lifeway)

Many churches are pushing pause on gathering their congregants for weekly worship services during this season of coronavirus risk, including children's ministry classes and groups. While many of us might be tempted to enjoy a break from church, that's the last thing we really need. At times like this, we desperately need God's Word to reassure us that He is in control; we need to sing songs that remind us of His power; we need *worship*.

The Bible teaches us to "watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, **not neglecting to gather together** (emphasis mine), as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25, CSB) We know as Christ followers, that we are called to gather together as the Church - the bride of Christ Himself. However, as we retreat to the safety of our houses under city ordinances and precaution, we should look around and recognize that the very people we live with in our homes are part of that same calling - our family. We should continue (or start) to gather together to worship as a family.

Whether you are a parent, a grandparent, aunt or uncle, or friendly neighbor, you can still gather together for a worship experience. This may sound intimidating to you, like something you are not equipped for, but it doesn't have to be difficult. In fact now is the perfect time to start doing a family worship time, and to *keep* doing long after coronavirus leaves us.

If you read the portion of Deuteronomy 6 sometimes referred to as the Shema, it's easy to see that family discipleship is a scriptural command: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in our house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (emphasis mine)." (Deuteronomy 6:5-7, CSB) So, let's face it. Many of us will be "sitting in our houses" - with our kids or other family members - for longer periods of time than we are currently used to, as some schools may close and workplaces may go to a temporary remote work model. Chances are, your family might be experiencing some anxiety in this unprecedented situation. Use this extra time wisely and talk about God's Word - the ultimate soother of our souls and healer of our hearts!

Try this to get you started: read, pray, sing - repeat! In this little book, Family Worship, Donald S. Whitney gives us a simple formula for how to have a family worship time. Most of us are capable of doing this. Just gather your crew, open your Bibles, read a chapter or two aloud, say a prayer, and sing a song!

- **Read:** You might choose to go through one of the Gospels together, or read a Psalm and a chapter from Proverbs. The ages of your children might dictate the content you choose. If you have younger children, consider grabbing one of their Bible storybooks and selecting a Bible story to read aloud while showing pictures. Older children and teens can help read aloud portions of Scripture. Everyone can add to the discussion by asking questions and offering comments. And guess what? If you don't know the answer, that's ok. Acknowledge the great question and offer to do some research and report back next time. Of course kids and teenagers are really good at asking questions that we would all like to know, but simply won't have the answer this side of Heaven. It's ok if that's your answer too.
- **Pray:** End your Bible reading and discussion time in prayer. You can ask your family what they would like to pray for. Are they worried and fearful about the coronavirus? Are people you know in your community actually sick with COVID-19 and need prayer? Is anyone in your family lonely and feeling isolated from friends and classmates? Is there too much sibling conflict from being cooped up? Offer prayers of hope and encouragement, repentance, and intercession.
- **Sing:** Close your family worship time by singing a song or two. Singing together might feel strange if you've never done so before. You might start by playing a worship song your family is familiar with from church worship or the radio. Ask everyone to sing along. Or, sing simple hymns that everyone knows - no accompaniment necessary.

Now, repeat the routine. It will get more comfortable each time. Try gathering weekly and work up to bi-weekly or even daily. This habit could change your family forever.

It may be inevitable that your church cannot gather for one or more weeks, but that does not mean you shouldn't gather as a family and experience the one true God together through His Word, through prayer, and through song. As an extension to your family worship time, my team at LifeWay Kids has put together a family worship experience for you, which includes a Bible story video and life application videos, as well as a discussion guide and activity sheet to download. Simply follow the steps below.

Step 1: Go to digitalpass.lifeway.com.

Step 2: Register if you are a new user or log in if you already have an account.

Step 3: Look for **LifeWay Kids at Home** and **LifeWay Preschool at Home** in the "Watch Now" Section.