

Family Worship & Prayer

Geoffrey R. Kirkland

Christ Fellowship Bible Church

Many benefits arise out of a faithful commitment to family worship. One benefit of family worship that that cannot be overemphasized is the continuous pattern and example of Christian praying that is set before every member of the family – especially the children. I want to present a number of ways that family worship and prayer are inextricably related.

1. Families Must Call on the Name of the Lord Together.

The Scriptures teach that we should “give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thess 5:18). This would mean that families can give thanks to God in prayer together. Believers must give thanks to the Lord with all their hearts in addition to telling of all God’s wonders (Ps 9:1). Worshippers of God boast in God all day long and can give thanks to Him forever (Ps 44:8). These verses speak of the constancy of prayerfulness and the ever-present readiness to pray to the Lord. What better way to teach every person in the family the importance and priority of prayer than to call on the name of the Lord together each day during the family worship time.

2. Families Should Pray to Teach the Children How to Pray.

A helpful way to teach children how to pray is to model prayer for them even from the time they are very young. As the children grow and mature, they have seen dad and mom pray, beg, beseech, call out, give thanks, confess, and repent. And over time, children will learn how to pray as they see the example of their parents. This can practically be done by allowing the children to pray as early as possible. A two or three year old can pray a simple, short prayer to the Lord. And over many years together, the children will be taught how to commune with the Triune God through the privileged vehicle of prayer.

3. Families Must Earnestly Present Petitions to God in Humble Dependence.

As the family gathers together to worship consistently, many petitions will arise in the day to day affairs of life that are worthy of bringing before God’s Sovereign Throne. An amazing opportunity for the education of children exists as parents earnestly present desires, requests, petitions, and supplications before God each day. Petitioning God in family worship prayer times entails the following key elements. First, it shows everyone present that every person is insufficient and inadequate to solve the problem/situation at hand and must be fully dependent on God for His gracious supply in a particular matter/request. Second, it reveals a relentless perseverance in prayer as the family continues to regularly, faithfully, consistently, and believingly present a particular request to God expecting His answer. Third, it teaches the children that any and every matter can be turned over to the Lord for prayer. There is no matter small enough and no mountain big enough to not bring to God’s Fatherly ear in prayer. And fourth, it allows for the joyful privilege of seeing how God answers petitions in His own time and how the Christian’s humble dependence on God will be blessed.

4. Families Must Beg for God's Sovereign Grace to Regenerate the Children.

During the family worship times, families can – and should – beg God for His saving grace to regenerate the children in the family. Parents should earnestly plead with God to save the children by His undeserved mercy and unspeakable grace. To have a young child sit on the lap of his parents and to hear dad and mom plead with God for the child's soul to be spared from the coming wrath of God is a very powerful element of family worship in showing the need for, the power of, the privilege of, and the dependence upon prayer. This exemplifies before the children's eyes that the parents are wholly unable to save a soul. It models fervent prayers to God asking that God would graciously save sinners. And, also, it reiterates time and time again that the children are unsaved and are desperately in need of God's intervening and reconciling grace to turn away His wrath which hangs over them.

5. Families Can Exemplify the Broad Spectrum of How to Pray & What to Pray For.

In the Word of God, prayer is as vast as a multi-faceted diamond. It has so many sparkles, colors, and shapes. Prayer is no different. Prayer consists of adoration, jubilation, meditation, shouting, whispering, confession, repentance, thanksgiving, petitions, supplications, submission, dedication – just to name a few. Prayer involves worship. Prayer involves mourning. Prayer involves lamenting. Prayer involves adoration and exultation. Prayer involves thanksgiving and recognition. Prayer involves petition and supplication. There is nothing that should *not* be presented to God in prayer. When families incorporate prayer in family worship times each day, the broad spectrum of prayers can be modeled for the children. Missionaries can be prayed for. Pastors can be uplifted. Thankfulness for the Truth contained in the Word of God. Exultation for the redemption found in Christ's substitutionary death can be prayed for. A successful surgery can be petitioned. An upcoming exam or lingering paper can be brought before God's throne. One can pray for finances, God's provision, reconciliation, forgiveness and these all model just how many ways we can talk to God in the marvelous privilege of prayer. Let us storm the throne of God with unending prayers. Let us frequently, quickly, daily, constantly, fervently, believingly, and hopefully pray to God concerning anything and everything. And let our children see us pray thus.

6. Families Should Adore and Magnify God in Prayer Simply for His Own Loveliness.

For a dad and mom to pray to God regularly and praise God not *only* for the many blessings that God gives but for the essential nature and unending beauty that God is in and of Himself is a tremendously potent example for the children. If families daily adore God for His character, His attributes, His graces, His nature, and His innate loveliness, consider how this teaches the children – through the years! – that God is infinitely worthy of praise (regardless of whether he gives or takes away). God is unspeakably lovely, beautiful, and praiseworthy, because He has always been that way. Even if He never created anything or anyone He would still be eternally worthy of joyous worship because of His intrinsic beauty. Let us praise God for who He is and let that passion for God's glory spill out frequently in our prayers so that our children learn to praise and pray to the God who is eternally worthy of worship simply because He is good.