

Family Worship & Praise

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The Word of God contains a host of examples of saints praising God in addition to a myriad of commands to praise God. Leah said: "I will praise the Lord" (Gen 29.35). Moses and Israel sang that they would "praise the Lord" (Ex 15.2). Deborah and Barak sang together and uttered: "I will sing praise to the Lord" (Judg 5.3). The psalmist commanded the people to "sing praise to the Lord you his godly ones" (Ps 30.4). King Nebuchadnezzar praised the Lord, the King of Heaven (Dan 4.37). Jesus prayed and said, "I praise You, Father" (Matt 11.25). Saints are told to "praise the Lord, all you Gentiles" (Rom 15.11).

I want to list a few ways that family worship enhances praise.

1. Family Worship Allows Families to Praise God Regularly.

When families come together for worship at a particular point each day for a time around God's Word, singing, and prayer, this permits families to praise God regularly as an act of worship. Psalm 78.4 tells parents to "tell to the generation to come the *praises* of the Lord." What better way to obey this text than for families to be together as they praise the Lord.

2. Family Worship Models for the Children that Praising God Can Occur in a Myriad of Forms.

Praise can include music but it is not limited to this only. Praise does not have to be verbal shouting. It does not have to be singing an old hymn. Praise can include a verbal testimony, a heartfelt and fervent cry to God in prayer, a passionate plea for God's forgiveness, or a song that is sung. In other words, family worship models for all who are present – especially the children – that praising God can occur in a host of different ways and in a myriad of different manners. One may weep and praise God. One may shout for joy and praise God. One may be sorely confused and perplexed yet still praising God. One may be elated with bursting jubilation and praise God.

3. Family Worship Glories in the Gospel of Grace Even in Trying Seasons of Life.

Praise is the antidote to fear. When there are hard and difficult seasons of life (which they will most definitely come), praise and worship is the best way to keep a Godward and Christ-centered perspective before, during, and after the trial. In fact, it may be a reality that one's trial might continue until death; nevertheless, God is still infinitely and supremely worthy of praise. To have this perspective, and to glory in the gospel of grace in these seasons of heartache testifies magnificently to the One who alone gives grace, strength, and confidence in each trial. For the children to see such a confidence in God is unspeakably powerful – and important. It reminds both dad and mom (every day – or as often as they conduct family worship) that even when in the midst of the fiery furnace of a trial, God is worthy of worship.

4. Family Worship Reminds Every Person Present that Praising God is a Christian Duty – Not an Activity When Emotions Permit It.

Flowing against the current of the worldly system, worship is not governed by feelings or emotions. Rather, one worships because he know it is right. A Christian's knowledge of God and his confidence in Him drives worship – it

is the engine that instigates and perpetuates ongoing worship. If emotions and subjective feelings were to be the originator and determiner of worship, then the waves of worship would ebb and flow with every passing moment depending on how one feels and responds to different occasions in life. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that Christians worship God because they know it is right because God simply commands it (Ps 99.5). God is infinitely worthy of worship (Rev 5.9). Thus, the more a family learns about God through the study of Scripture, talking about the Word, discussing theology and the practical implications therein, the more a family will be compelled to worship God. A certainty in God fuels worship not a situational feeling. This shows why worship, then, can stand strong even in the fiercest of life's storms that may crash into his life. For a family to praise God as a Christian duty – rather than when emotions permit it – models a biblically sound theology of worship as it affects one's life.

5. Family Worship Allows Each Christian to Obey the Commands of the Lord to “Praise Him” – Especially in the Company of One’s Family.

In Joshua 24.15, Joshua has the people of Israel gathered and reminds them of how God led them in their past. Then he says before the congregation, “As for me and my house, we will *serve* the LORD.” The Hebrew word for *serve* can be translated in a host of ways depending on the immediate context of each verse – to work, to serve, to perform a religious duty, to worship. Here it seems that Joshua is telling the nation that he commits his family to the regular discipline of worshipping God. When families meet together for regular worship, this allows each person in the family an opportunity to obey the commands of the Lord to praise God in the congregation with other believers (Ps 35.18; 107.32). When other believers gather together, great encouragement is received.

6. Family Worship Enhances Joy the More God is Praised.

Praising God is to be done with great joy. God says: “sing for joy to the Lord” (Ps 33.1). All the godly ones are to “sing for joy” (Ps 149.5). What greater opportunity exists than to praise God as a family and allow the greatest object of joy, the greatest reason for joy, the greatest message of joy, permeate the heart of each family member during this time of family worship. God must be praised not merely for what He gives but primarily for who He is. We must worship Him as the giver more than we worship Him for the gifts that He bestows. Family worship enhances joy in the family life as God is sought, prayed to, worshipped, and praised.