

# Training your children in the home to sit still in the pew

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There are many churches that encourage families to worship together *on Sundays in corporate worship*. There are those with the perspective that it behooves children to learn to sit still, sit quietly, hear the preaching, and observe God's people worshipping the Living Savior. For those who go to church with children (even small children!) with the hope and desire of seeing them sit still in the pew, the question might be asked: *how do I do this?* What's the magic trick? Honestly, there's not one. But there are some practical tips that I can offer that may help those who choose to bring their small children into corporate worship so that they can *train their children in the home to sit still in the pew*.

***In this essay, I'll provide some practical tips and helps for parents in this regard.***

- 1. Treat family worship in the home as preparation for corporate worship with the church.* — Make a regular practice of gathering the 'little church' together in the home each day for the worship of God and view that as a way of practicing for 'corporate worship' on Sundays. Begin in the home and train on the couch & trust that in due time the children will sit still and pay attention in the pew.
- 2. Don't allow in that worship time at home what you wouldn't allow in the pew.* — If you don't allow your children to kick and scream in church then don't allow that in family worship either. Be intentional to allow in the brief time of family devotions what you would permit in church. Be careful to set the barometer high so that the children will learn well each day in the home so that when they sit in the pew it'll be an overflow of what they've learned in the home.
- 3. Work on sitting still for small periods of time and gradually increase that time for the children to sit still.* — Maybe, like all parents, you think: my kids have a hard time sitting still! Of course! So be diligent to train the children to sit still. It takes time and it takes patience and effort. Work on having the child, or children, sit still for a small period of time with a book on his lap and increase that time as days and weeks go by and you'll be training your child to sit still.
- 4. Constantly explain the ultimate goal and purpose of this preparation: because God is worthy & Christ deserves our worship, reverence & honor.* — The goal is not just getting kids to sit still. The goal is not even getting children to Behave well at church. The goal is the heart: heart-transformation! So frequently speak of the goal of family worship, the reason for sitting still, and the goal of private, family, and corporate worship: *our God deserves our praise!*
- 5. Remain faithful and consistent in your training and in your discipline when the children disobey you.* — When a child sins, he must be disciplined. When you are teaching and training, the hard but necessary element for parents is consistency. Parents must remain faithful in the training and discipline when the kids disobey -- especially in the home.
- 6. Speak much of the beauty of Christ, His atoning blood, and His sweet satisfactions for He alone is preeminently supreme.* — Parents have the inestimable privilege of showing the children a big God. That is, parents must paint before the children a most beautiful Christ, a supreme Delight, and a Friend of Sinners. This constant message will convey to the children that the parents absolutely adore their God and earnestly want the kids to know and worship Him also!
- 7. Enjoy the journey and remember the blessed privilege that God has given you to teach those little (and growing) eternal souls about the Word of God, the ways of God, and the gospel of Christ.* — It's easy to bend a little branch but when a tree has been planted and growing for years it's nearly impossible to bend the massive tree, so let parents remember

to mold and shape the hearts of the children while they are young. As a small acorn grows over time into a large tree, so the children that we have grow little by little over the course of time. God has given a marvelous privilege and duty to all parents to teach the souls of the children and bring them up in the gospel of God's grace.

*8. Patiently endure even the hard and discouraging moments as you remember that growth happens slowly, steadily, and progressively (not instantaneously or overnight). — Remember the big picture. Even when family worship is a disaster (and there will be those nights, plenty of them) and even when you don't get much of the sermon in corporate worship, don't lose heart or grow discouraged. Pray. Regain your composure and reaffirm your trust in God's promises. Be patient and remember that your labor for Christ's glory and for the kids' souls is never in vain.*

*9. Focus (and refocus) your heart constantly on the big picture: you love your Christ and then show your children your glorious Christ and beseech them to be reconciled to this merciful, saving, and sufficient Friend of sinners. — Behavioral change is good and desired. But remember to focus on the heart. Realign your own mind and refocus your perspective on a most worthy Savior who deserves worship and a gracious God who saves sinners! If you are captured by your God, you speak with love, with affection, with power, and with passion, and your children will see the genuineness of your ministry. Labor on and labor hard to know and love your Christ and then pass that on to them! You can't give what you don't have yourself. So work to remember Christ as your Savior and Lord and then out of joyful delight and out of privileged duty, pass on the gospel truth to your children.*

*10. Remember to bath all these endeavors in much prayer, persistent prayer, and confident prayers that God will bless your labors to teach and train your children. — You cannot save your children. Only God can save. Since you cannot save them, pray them into heaven. Bathe them in prayer. Pray with them and for them. Pray incessantly and persistently for their souls. Ask! Seek! Knock! Believe that God will answer your prayers and save your children through your earnest prayers and gospel-pleadings!*

*11. Seek out another person in the church to sit with you and help you in corporate worship if a need arises to hold a baby or calm down an energetic child. — The body of Christ is a family. After all, families are made up of the older and more mature as well as the new-borns and infants. When young parents have nursing babies or young children, it may be the case that you can request the help of another person in the church to help you, lend you a hand, hold a baby, or assist you in any way. Don't be afraid to ask and don't be too prideful to request the help of others. Many are more than eager to serve in this way!*