

## “Family Worship” (Josh 24.15 — “As for me & my house, we will serve the LORD”)

And verily there is one spring and cause of the decay of religion in our day, which we cannot but touch upon and earnestly urge a redress of; and that is the neglect of the worship of God in families by those to whom the charge and conduct of them is committed. (*Preface to the Second London Baptist Confession, 1689*)

**Joshua 24:15 — Breaking it down for study:** [see also: Deut 6:4-9; Ps 78:1-8; Gen 18:19; Prov 2:1; Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 3:4-5]

1. The Father's own **spiritual growth** (*but as for me...*)
2. The Father's own **responsibility** (*and MY...*)
3. The Father's own **leadership** (*and my house...*)
4. The Father's own **determination** (*we will...*)
5. The Father's own **worship** (*we will serve...*)
6. The Father's own **theology** (*serve the LORD...*)

The Church of Scotland took “Family Worship” seriously, as can be shown here:

Men were strongly admonished if they did not lead in family worship. An elder reproved them and if the fathers persisted in this neglect, they were barred from taking the Lord's Supper!

Jason Helopoulos strongly encourages us:

As a Christian father and husband, I am to continually put God and the testimony of His mighty works before my wife and children. And there is no better way to do this than regular, consistent, and intentional family worship. No matter how spontaneous I may be, sharing the truth of God and His mighty works “off the cuff” could never equal what we do in regular daily family worship. It is the best means for effectual evangelism and discipleship in the home. By practicing daily worship in the home, my family is continually put in the way of God's grace. The great accounts and truths of the Scriptures are set before us every night. We are daily seeking the Lord's throne of grace in united prayer. And we are offering thanksgiving and praise to God as we join our voices in song. Each of these elements of family worship convey to the minds and hearts of those gathered the truth of God and His mighty works in a full, regular, and consistent way that no other practice in the home can rival... Christian families practicing family worship will also find that it centers their home upon Christ. Our home is always centered upon something, but often it isn't Christ. It's not that we intentionally center it upon something else, we just unknowingly do so. Other things begin to dominate our common life together. It could be things outside the home as we venture out to attend soccer games and ballet lessons. Equally, it can be things within the home like television, video games, or even laundry. These can all be good things and they can serve a good and right purpose. However, they must all remain in their appropriate place: secondary and tertiary status. As a Christian father, husband, mother, or wife, our desire is that our homes are dominated by Christ above all else. Our hope is that our family and its activities will center upon Him. He is our Lord, Savior, and Friend. We have been secured in His grip by grace. And that grace welling up within us leads us to want to worship Him and see our loved ones worship Him as well.

This commendable resolution of Joshua, is absolutely necessary for every true son of Joshua, that is entrusted with the care and direction of a family in our day: and, if it was ever appropriate for ministers to preach, or for people to put family-religion into practice, it is never more so than in the present age; since it is greatly to be feared, that out of those many households that call themselves Christians, there are only a few that serve God in their respective families as they should. (George Whitefield)

“Praise is certainly not at all so common in family prayer as other forms of worship... I agree with Matthew Henry when he says, “They that pray in the family do well; they that pray and read the Scriptures do better; but they that pray, and read, and sing do best of all.” There is a completeness in that kind of Family Worship which is much to be desired.” (Spurgeon)

Where to start & how to get it going?

How do you begin? Begin simply. Grab a Bible, read a short Psalm, pray a brief prayer, sing the doxology. Don't wait until you prepared or no longer apprehensive. Begin tonight. Many of us have already waited too long. And then gather again tomorrow night and the night after that. When you miss a day or even a week, don't beat yourself up, just pick it right back up again. Over the course of weeks and months, you will find it to be one of the great joys of your life together as a family. A joy that carries in its practice blessing upon blessing to the praise and glory of God.

“It is here, in family worship, that the reformation must begin” (Matthew Henry).