

# Leading in Family Worship During Conflict

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I'm a great sinner who has been redeemed by a greater Savior. But I still am a sinner! Recently, I lashed out in anger at my children. I raised my voice pointed my finger at them in selfish anger and scolded them. In moments like these, how can I, even in such a moment of sinful conduct, lead my family to the presence of God in family worship? Someone might say: isn't that hypocritical? Aren't you being two-faced in sinning and then leading in family worship?

How do we as sinful parents still lead in family worship even in those moments when we've sinned (right in front of our kids!)? How can we lead well? How can we model godliness, practice repentance, and obey the Lord in bringing the family (the little Church) into God's presence in family worship? ***I will provide 5 suggestions to lead in family worship during moments of conflict.***

## 1. HUMBLED

God does not require us to lead in family worship *only after* we've got it all together. Amazingly, God uses broken and humble vessels for His glory. We must veer away from the mentality that we've gotta 'have everything put together nice and neat' and then we'll be adequate to serve! No! Our sufficiency and adequacy comes from the righteous robes of Christ reckoned to us, not from our performances in self-cleansing. Come to God humbled and come before your family humbled.

## 2. REPENTANT

God is near to the broken-hearted. Turn to God and return to Him (as the prophets so often preached!) and He will hear from heaven and bring blessing. Repent of your sin to God (first) and to the family members you've sinned against, and to the family as a whole if they observed your sinful action. A repentant disposition is one of the greatest pedagogical tools a father has in the home. The children should not perceive the parents to be sinless or too good for repentance. Rather, let them see your repentant heart and repentant prayers to God! That'll teach!

## 3. FORGIVENESS

In your repentant heart, you come to your family and specifically (and humbly!) acknowledge *your own* sin. This requires, however, you cannot blame-shift. You cannot minimize the sin and say it was a mistake or mess-up. You can't make excuses about it. Own it. Acknowledge your own sin and then specifically ask the family members to forgive you for your own sin against God and against them. Wait for your family to hear your request for forgiveness and then let them answer and affirm their forgiveness of you. Remind them (everyone, even the kids) that forgiveness is a promise of pardon where you actively choose to not hold the sin against the person, you won't bring it up to others, nor will you dwell on it repeatedly). Use this as a God-given, grace-filled shepherding moment to teach about forgiveness -- and God's greater forgiveness to big sinners like us (yes, even to big sinners like dad and mom!).

## 4. LEAD (do the family worship)

Lead. Yes, lead in family worship. Again, God does not require perfection in his worship leaders. But he does require humility and faithfulness to Him. So, in these moments of sin and humiliation before God and before the family, let this not drive you *away* from doing your duties in leading at home, but rather let it drive you *to the oft-receiving embrace* of an adopting Father who loves His elect with a preserving and undiminishing love. Lead. Sing. Read. Teach. Pray. Seek to be obedient to God *even if you don't feel like it*. Even if you feel like an inch tall and your sin is plastered across your forehead, remember to gaze upon Christ's cross and remind yourself (and the family) of the marvelous grace of our loving Lord -- indeed, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt! Praise the Lord!

## 5. TRUST (Trust God that thru our missteps & sins God will still use it for his glory)

Parenting consists of a massive trust in God's sovereignty. In our blunders and in our sins, we trust God that He will use us and our inadequacies to shine the spotlight on His grace and mercy all the more! We pray that our children would see that the same grace that we call *them* to embrace is the same grace that *we as the parents* need -- daily! We humble ourselves, repent of sin, ask for forgiveness, and dutifully and joyfully lead in family worship trusting that God Himself will use *His Word* not *because* of us but *in spite* of us as we teach His powerful and living Word in our homes on a daily basis. May God use our sins and the moments of conflict to result in bringing Him glory and great teaching moments in the home for our children to see the manifold riches of God's love & the mercies of His gospel!