

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN.

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In this brief article, I hope to convey some parenting advice to teach your children while in the pew at Church. We as a family have prayerfully and thoughtfully tried to implement these truths — and we are still working at it — and I hope and pray this will benefit other parents who strive to teach the children to sit and listen while in the House of God. Obviously, this requires much patience, compassion, consistency and prayer. May God equip and encourage and enable you to do this for His glory.

STAY AWAKE.

When we gather to worship God we must give full attention and devotion to the God of the universe because He deserves it. His character is so flawless and His person is so impeccable and when the gathered church assembles, we draw near to His immediate presence through Christ. Because this is true, parents must diligently teach the children to be alert, awake and focused during the worship service. Of course children squirm and their attention span may differ from child to child and depending on their age. However, parents must diligently strive as those who know their children best to call them to pay attention, to sit up, to stay awake, to look ahead and give God their full attention.

HAVE THE BIBLE OPEN.

Smaller children may not have their Bibles open simply because they do not read yet. However, as children grow and have the ability to read and follow along, it is my encouragement for parents to have their children take a Bible with them to church and do their best to open it, turn to the passage, follow along and benefit from the living Word. Of course, the Bible itself can be a distraction, especially if the children have a kids' Bible with images and pictures. But parents must carefully and thoughtfully think about when to give their children a Bible and encourage the kids to have their own Bibles with them in church. It is my encouragement for this to be done as early as possible. The power is in the Word, the written and living and soul-converting Word.

SIT UP AND LOOK AHEAD.

Part of the honor we give to God is giving attention and focus to the man who preaches the Word. When the congregation has gathered, it behooves parents to teach the children to sit up and look straight ahead during the worship service. This helps the children focus. And this also helps minimize distractions from those around them. Encourage your children to look straight ahead and focus on the song lyrics, the preaching of the Word of God, the word that is read publicly, and the corporate praying. This doesn't happen perfectly every time. But little by little, strive to teach the children by setting an example for them, sharing your expectations with them, holding them to this at home during family worship, and then reminding them before the service begins.

BE STILL.

Children love to fidget. And that is not always bad. But in the house of God, we must instill in our children the importance of being still in the presence of God and drawing near to listen to His Word. Work diligently in the home during family worship times to implement this with your children. Encourage them to sit still, to not fidget with toys or stuffed animals in their hands, and not to distract themselves with other things, but rather keep teaching and reinforcing and reminding them of the joyous duty and highest privilege to gather in God's presence and hear from Him through the reading and preaching of His Word. Keep at it. Stay faithful. Persevere!