

Family WORSHIP



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FOREWORD

The writer do not remember exactly when I and my family started our family devotion or family worship. I can only remember that our family worship began about fifteen years ago when we had heard a sermon that encouraged the congregation to have a family worship.

Until that moment we have altered several times the "liturgy" or regulations in our family worship. Then finally we found what we considered to be the most suitable one, and so we continually use it till now.

Our entire family have been experiencing the wonderful blessings of family worship in accordance with the promise of God's word.

Therefore we always encourage our big family or brothers and sisters in Christ to practice it. Occasionally, as the writer, I even speak about this subject of family worship in sermons or seminars. We really long for all of us to be able to experience these wonderful blessings of God.

Praise God for His plan that this material can be compiled after the writer met one of God's servants who encouraged him to make a book of it.

Finally, all the glory be to God only, who has bestowed so great a blessing and wisdom to our family and to all of us. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria,
The writer

FAMILY WORSHIP

As children of God, most of us are familiar with family worship, or at least have heard of it. Some of us may have practiced it already, either regularly or not.

One of the Bible verses or events in the Bible that explain family worship is:

2 Sa 6:11 And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obbedom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obbedom, and all his household.

At that time the ark of God was put in the house of Obbedom. Previously David desired to move the ark from the house of Abinadab in Baalah of Judah to the City of David. But at the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah son Abinadab took hold of the ark of God without God's permission so that God's anger burned against Uzza and struck him down. Uzza died because of his carelessness. This makes David afraid so that the ark of God was not taken to the City of David, but to the house of Obbedom. And the Lord blessed Obbedom and his entire household because of the ark of God. (2 Sa 6)

God's blessings poured on Obbedom and his entire household were so obvious that the people around them could see this with their own eyes. They then told David how the Lord had blessed the household of Obbedom, even everything he had because of the ark of God in his house.

2 Sa 6:12 And it was told king David, saying, the LORD hath blessed the house of Obbedom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obbedom into the city of David with gladness.

Why did the presence of the ark of God in the house of Obbedom become a blessing? Because we know that at that time the ark of God symbolizes the presence of God. So when the ark of God was in the house of Obbedom it means that God was present in the house of Obbedom.

*Jdg 20:26 Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27 And **the children of Israel enquired of the LORD.** — **for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days.***

*2 Sa 6:2 And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence **the ark of God, whose name is***

called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.

Likewise, the presence of God in our homes or inviting God to be present in our house will bring blessings upon us and our entire household, even upon everything we have. Inviting God to be present in our homes is the core or essence of family worship which was also revealed by the Lord Jesus:

Mt 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Although in the verse above nothing is mentioned explicitly that the two or three persons here is a family, yet at least the verse explains that if two or three persons, namely husband and wife or husband, wife and kid gather together in the Name of the Lord Jesus, then God is present amidst them.

And this kind of fellowship to worship will become a blessing, because:

Mt 18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

The above verse clearly says that "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask," then "it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

We certainly approve that two persons who can agree most easily in asking anything would be a married couple, namely husband and wife, because they have been united or joined together by the LORD God and they both have much in common concerning their mutual struggles.

And we can imagine how great a blessing we will experience when our prayers are granted by the LORD our God!

Paul too described the same issue to the Corinthians:

1 Cor 7:5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. (KJV).

“Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”(NET)

This verse is addressed to the married couple, husband and wife, that they should try hard not to live far away from each other or live separately so that they will not be tempted by the devil to do wrong, and that they may devote themselves to prayer. “ **Prayer**” here actually means to pray together, and if each of them has to pray on their own

only, then they can keep on doing so eventhough they live far away from each other.

Most of us may be fortunate enough to live together in one house, but sometimes we do not realize that many activities may rob us from our time of togetherness. Many activities, even "ministries", deprive the time for family worship and prayer. Some families do not have time for family worship because either husband or wife has each own occupations and activities, and some prefer to spend time with their friends, while others pursue their hobbies and sports.

Not a few of the family members have a busy "ministry" that robs the family of their time to hold a family worship, while the ministry is actually not important and their presence there was not really needed. Therefore we should wisely choose our priorities in life. The passage about Mary and Martha might become one of the references.

*Lk 10:38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called **Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.** 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. 42 **But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.***

From the above description we can understand what the Lord Jesus said, that sitting at the Lord's feet and listen to His word is a need, and is the best choice in life. Therefore to hold a family worship which is essentially inviting the Lord to be present in our family, praising His Name, listening to His word is a necessity and is the best choice in life. When our family gather together in fellowship to pray with one accord to the Lord, then the LORD God will grant our prayers.

Since the power of prayer of two persons who agree is so powerful, the devil will keep trying with all his strength to prevent God's children from having the opportunity to hold a family worship and to pray together. The devil will try to break apart the family. Therefore we must be wise in arranging the time and activities in our lives. Give top priority to what is truly God's will, not to what we or our organization wants.

Our family has been holding a family worship for almost fifteen years now and we have experienced God's abundant blessings. Many people assume that God's blessings are identical with getting much money. God indeed has granted us to get sufficient amount of money, yet the true blessing is not the money but the happiness and the opportunity to enjoy the days of our lives.

Psm 128:2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee!

Pr 30:8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.

Ecc 3:13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

Isa 65:22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their works.

We often see so many people who are wealthy yet do not have time of togetherness with their families, nor the opportunity to play with their children and grandchildren. And quite a lot of them even do not have time to enjoy their food. They are so busy in their pursuit of money that they do not have time to enjoy what they have gained. There are also quite a lot of rich people who can not enjoy their wealth, because they are restrained from good health, or they always worry so that they can not enjoy the good things of this world that the Lord has provided for our enjoyment.

There are also wealthy families whose children compete with each other and live in hostility, even involve in wrong doings.

They have much money but they do not have God's blessings to live a happy life and enjoy their days. Therefore let's practice the family worship to experience the blessings of the Lord and see the power of God the Father.

Family worship is a real worship, so it has a leader and a gathering of people/the family members, like a congregation or a church.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians it is explained that the husband is the head of family, or the head of the church/fellowship in the family.

Ef 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the savior of the body.

So the family worship should be led by the husband as head of the family, except for his absence. Since the family worship is a very simple worship, the main role of the husband or father as a priest in his home is to be the one who should lead the family worship or lead on particular days.

We often encouraged our relatives or brothers and sisters of the same belief to hold a family worship, and at times even present this material as a lecture or a seminar.

The writer still remembers clearly the time when presenting this subject/material in one of the BUMN (state-owned corporation), a

mother asked why she did not experience God's blessing although she and her family had been practicing the family worship regularly. At first the writer was startled when I heard the question, because I believe that God's word is always true. Later I found out what caused the problem. Apparently in the lady's family worship, she led or acted as the priest even though her husband was present and joined the family worship.

Although all the children of God are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, yet God gives special rules for certain things that we should obey. That is why the writer suggested to the lady to hand over the position as priest in her family to her husband. She should not take possession of that position but be a suitable helper for him. The wife should help so the husband can be a good priest in the family.

Our family usually come together for family worship at around 9 o'clock in the evening, since all the family members will already be home then, have finished their dinner, and some of us will have completed the urgent assignments. We do not choose a later hour for fear that some family members will already get sleepy. And besides that, our grandson who is just 4 years old can also participate in our family worship when he is not yet asleep.

Usually all family members gather in our room and kneel around the bed, each with a Bible and a Daily Bread. Our family worship begins

with reading together audibly the verses or passages chosen as the main theme of the devotional that day. In our Daily Bread those verses are usually listed on the left or right top of the page.

After the verses are read through, we all read in our hearts silently the devotional article or the meditation on those verses. Finished the reading then one of the family members who took the lead on that night chooses a song of praise to be sung twice. After singing the praise, we all participate in the prayer-time led by the one who is leading.

In our family each member leads the family worship by turns daily, starting from the writer as head of the family, then his wife the next day, followed by the eldest child, and so on by the other children subsequently, then back to the head of the family. Usually at the beginning of the new year and on special days the writer, as the head of the family, would lead.

We begin our prayer time by thanking God for His Word and the devotional or meditation we have just read, followed by praying for all the family members, business, ministries and our nation, also for other countries.

Finished praying, we all would hug each other, kiss the cheek while saying "I love you", or sometimes "Thank you", or any other short nice

comments or encouragements. We hug each other in a relaxed way without any definite rules, just randomly everyone among us. Thus every night for almost fifteen years the writer hugs his wife and children, and likewise among the family members, and it has always been a very pleasant moment. The family worship usually lasts only 10-15 minutes and often continued by chatting or talking casually for some time.

We are grateful, not only because God has granted us all the best, but through our family worship we can also learn day by day to know more about God we worship, and get closer to Him. Besides that, family worship provides intimacy too between members of our family. Even when there is a slight difference of opinion among us, usually the friction or conflict won't last long.

During the day there might occur a slight uneasy atmosphere between us. But that same night we all hug each other, so that the unpleasant feelings diminish, and even disappear. In addition to all that, our family solidarity becomes more solid by sharing common family burdens and responsibilities, because we are accustomed to care for one another and pray for each other. The writer prays for his wife and children, his wife prays for the writer and their children, the children pray for their parents and siblings.

We rarely see our three children quarrel with each other since their childhood until today. Instead, they love and care for each other even more day by day. This is not surprising while God is always present in our household so that He is involved in every step of the life of our family members.

Psm 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

While we every day read God's Word and our daily devotionals, our knowledge of the Word of God and He Himself will increase continually. We are also happy because the Daily Bread provides guidance for an Annual Bible Reading. So every year we can read the Bible through, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation, at least once. But above all we are conscious of God's beautiful plan in the life of every member of our family, because God is the Leader in our family.

Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Dear readers in Christ, you do not have to practice a family worship such as we are doing, for until now I myself have not yet found any passage or verse which describes in detail about the methods or liturgy of a family worship. The most important is our desire to invite

God the Father to be present in our family so that we will be able to know Him better and become closer to Him. Yet we must keep in mind that a family worship is a real worship and should be carried out in a proper way.

Heb 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.