

WORSHIP IN THE HOME

by

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THE BIBLE BASIS FOR WORSHIP IN THE HOME

The separation of church and state is a basic principle built into the American governmental system. It seems to us to be a proper safeguard against abuse of political power by a perverted religion. While the separation of church and state is proper, the separation of church and home is not.

The home serves a distinctly spiritual function in the lives of men and women. It is the place of the most meaningful and influential of all human relations. It is the place where life-values are set. It is the place, above all others, where children are trained and prepared for life. It must be a place where spiritual truths are held preminent in conversation and in conduct.

Someone has said, "The vitality of your spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place the Word of God holds in your mind and heart." The principle can also be applied to the home as well as to the individual. The vitality of the spiritual life of home will be in exact proportion to the place the Word of God holds there. Believing that principle to be valid, I have chosen to share with you five studies on the theme "Worship in the Home."

I will share with you (1) the Bible basis for worship in the home, (2) the human need for worship in the home, (3) a practical method of worship in the home, (4) some special blessings

of worship in the home, and (5) the problems encountered by worship in the home. Please share these five studies with an open heart that God may use them to strengthen your home.

Divine command

God gives a divine command that we worship in our homes. It is expressed in Deuteronomy

6:4-6 in these words, *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And the words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign unto thine hands, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”*

Examine what that passage of Scripture says. (1) You are to love God with the totality of your being, verses 4,5. (2) You are to treasure His words by keeping them in your heart, verse 6. (3) You are to teach His words *“diligently”* to your children, verse 7a. (4) You are to make God’s words the subject of your conversation, the guide for your feet, the government of your hand, and the shield of your eyes, verses 7b,8. (5) You are to use your home as a sign board (figuratively speaking) upon which your neighbors can know the truth of God through His Word. That passage alone is sufficient basis for you to engage in family worship.

Human need

The need of the human heart calls for worship in the home. It is expressed in Psalm 78:-8 in these words, *Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the words of God, but keep his commandments, and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.”*

Did you catch the impact of those verses of Scripture? Let me review the basic principles. (1) The truth of God must be passed from generation to generation, verses 3-6. (2) God has established the principle that His law is to be made known to the children of a new generation through the fathers of the former generation, verse 5. (3) All the works of God-- His praises, His strengths, and His works-- must be passed on by teaching the new generation, verse 4. (4) Each new generation will be led to faith, to *“set their hope in God,”* as they are taught of Him by the former generation, verse 7. (5) Instruction of the children in the things of God will keep them from the sins of their fathers and make them a people who please God, verse 8. That is the grand design of God which is followed by worship and teaching in the home.

Biblical illustration

The Passover provided an illustration of meaningful worship in the home. The Passover,

the most sacred of all occasions among the Jews, was observed in the home. That is a little surprising, isn't it? Yet, it illustrates how important the home is in the design of God.

Exodus, chapter 12, recounts the instructions God gave Moses concerning the institution and the observance of the Passover memorial. There are no less than nine references in that account to the house or the family as the Passover was observed. Orthodox Jews still celebrate the memorial by a solemn ceremony conducted in the home of the worshippers. You will remember that Jesus observed the last Passover with His disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper memorial while there were in the "upper room" of a private home in Jerusalem, Luke 22: 7-13.

Some of your greatest spiritual experiences can be in your own home, with your family gathered about you, if you truly worship in your home. I challenge you to institute family worship today and practice it consistently.

Christian custom

There was an early Christian custom showing the appropriateness of worship in the home. Where did the earliest Christians meet to worship? They had no great auditoriums or comfortable church buildings. The earliest Christian congregations met in private homes. Check your New Testament. There was a church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:9.) There was a church in the house of Nymphas in Laodicea (Colossians 4:15). There was a church in the home of Philemon in Colosse (Philemon 2). The expression, "*the church in thy house,*" is common in the epistles of Paul. Yes, the first Christian congregations met in private homes to worship, to observe the memorial ordinances instituted by Jesus (Acts 2:42,46; 10:48; 16:32-34), and to engage in special periods of prayer (Acts 12:12). You can do no better than to follow the example of those early Christians and make your house a place of prayer and study, as you worship in your home.

The church house is important in our system of worship today. Christians should not absent themselves from the assembly of believers in the house of God. On the other hand, the home of Christians will miss a great blessing if there is no gathering of the family and meeting with God in the privacy of the family residence. Do not relegate all acts of worship to the meetings of the church, but gather your family and worship God in your home.

THE HUMAN NEED FOR WORSHIP IN THE HOME

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," Jeremiah 10:23.

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Romans 3:9-12, 23.

Those desperate words of condemnation upon wayward mankind set forth the imperative for the help of God in the affairs of men. God's help is provided to answer man's need. The divine aid is described in Holy Scripture, made available through Jesus Christ, and applied by the Holy Spirit.

We have come to a second consideration of the subject of "worship in the home, seeing

the command, the example, and the blessings of it. Let us turn now to a consideration of the human need for worship in the home.

We spend more time in our homes than at any other place. If we do not recognize God's presence there, we will spend the majority of our time apart from a consideration of His presence. That will not do. It is a dangerous course. We must cultivate the awareness of God in the privacy of our homes.

Human depravity

We need God in our homes because of the depravity of our hearts. The Bible teaches a truth we call the hereditary and total depravity of man. That simply means that man is weakened from birth in all aspects of his nature—mind, emotion, will, and body. It means he is not able to resist successfully when tempted to sin. It means he needs help from outside himself, divine help, or he will be the bondsman of sin. That is why he needs God in his home as well as in the meetings of his church.

Hear the testimony of Scripture. Jeremiah 10:23 declares, *“O Lord, I know the way of a man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.”* The explanation for that conclusion is stated in Jeremiah 17:9, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* Yet further, Isaiah 53:6 speaks this word of truth concerning the whole human race in general and each person in particular, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* The Bible clearly states that we need help outside ourselves to be what God designed us to be.

The help we need is provided in Holy Scripture. You can see it manifest in Psalm 119. That is an amazing psalm. It is composed of 176 verses which are grouped into twenty-two sections of eight verses each. It is an “alphabetical psalm” in the Hebrew language in which it was first written. The first word of each of the first eight verses begins with the letter **aleph**, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The first word of each of the next eight verses begins with the letter **beth**. The first word of each of the next eight verses begins with the letter **gimel**, and so on throughout the Hebrew alphabet. Another interesting aspect of Psalm 119 is that 174 of the 176 verses make a direct reference of the Word of God. That one psalm shows the importance of Scripture in dealing with the problem of the depravity of human nature.

The Bible keeps a person from lying (verse 29), vanity (verse 37), covetousness, (verse 36), iniquity (verse 133) and every false way (verse 128). It provides the blessings of comfort in affliction (verses 50, 92), keeps from shame (verse 80), gives light by which to walk (verse 105), provides protection (verse 114), and safety (verse 117), gives assurance (verse 116), promotes understanding, (verse 130), assures of the presence of God (verse 151), provides deliverance (verse 153), strengthens one (verses 156, 159), provides awe (verse 165) and understanding (verse 169) and help (verse 173). Imagine! All of that blessed ministry communicated to your heart by the Word of God.

Spiritual warfare

We need God in our homes because of the warfare we face. There is a spiritual warfare raging about us. It began with Lucifer's first vain ambition to exalt his throne above the stars of God and be like the Most High. It has ebbed and flowed through all of human history and is increasing in intensity today. We are involved in that warfare, whether we want to be or not.

The Apostle James explained that the reason for the conflict within our own beings is that

a spiritual contest is going on (James 4:1). The Apostle Peter wrote, *“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,”* I Peter 2:11.

The Christian is engaged in a warfare against spiritual forces. Listen to this reading of Ephesians 6:10-13, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* The Apostle Paul wrote further, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after God to the pulling down of strong holds)”* II Corinthians 10:3,4. Does that description of the spiritual warfare make you realize your need for the help of God?

The spiritual warfare is unceasing. It is carried on at church, in your business, at your leisure, in your home, all the time. You need the presence and help of God all the time. It is not enough to meet God at church once a week. It is not enough to have an occasional personal devotional period. Each member of your family is faced with the same spiritual conflict which faces you. Worship in your home will greatly fortify you and your loved ones against the attack of your souls.

Family Responsibilities

We need God in our homes because of our responsibility to our children. What a solemn responsibility that is. Each parent is responsible to God for the proper training of each child in the home. Family worship in the home will greatly influence children in the way of holiness.

The child is usually in school about twenty-five hours per week, in Sunday school about one hour per week, and in the home about one hundred forty-two hours per week. That means the home is more influential than either the school or the Sunday school in the spiritual training of the child. The church program can only supplement (but can not substitute the spiritual training you give in the home. What is taught in the home is commonly more influential in the life of the child than what is taught in the church.

Oh, be a responsible parent! In the words of Holy Scripture, *“Love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might,”* and let the words of God *“be in thine heart...teach them diligently unto thy children... talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up... bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and s... as frontlets between thine eyes... write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates,”* Deuteronomy 6:5-9.

A PRACTICAL METHOD OF WORSHIP IN THE HOME

He was a sincere Christian man who came to talk with me about the spiritual welfare of his home. He wanted to be a Christian husband to his wife and a Christian father to his children. We spoke of many things taught in the Bible. At last, we came to the subject of family worship in the home. His self-consciousness and lack of spiritual maturity manifest themselves when, almost with tears in his eyes, he said, *“I don’t know how to conduct a family worship period. Help me.”* I want to share with you some of the things I shared with him-- a practical method of worship in the home.

This third study of *“Worship in the Home”* is designed to help you begin or sustain the

blessing of family worship. In the first study, we saw that the Bible recommended and even commanded spiritual instruction in the home. The second study reviewed the great need we have to meet God daily, and the benefits of meeting Him as a family unit. Now, make a note of these practical suggestions concerning family worship in the home.

Prepare for your time of family worship

Prepare yourself, if you are the leader of the worship period. Think in advance about what you will do and in what order you will do it. Take careful check of your own attitude. (The family worship period is not a time to censure disobedience not to rebuke mistakes made during the day.) Prepare your heart by prayer so you are personally ready to meet God. Turn your thoughts to worship and praise (Philippians 4:8)

Prepare the place for family worship. If you worship together in the living room or den, straighten the room as if an important guest was to come. Indeed, you have invited your Heavenly Father to be there! If you worship in the bedroom, be sure the covers are straightened and the clothes are properly arranged. Do not invite God into a shabby mess. He is worthy of our best.

Prepare your material for family worship. Be sure there is a Bible available for each person present. Even the little child who cannot read will find it meaningful to have his own little Bible in the family group. When all things are ready, call the family together to meet with God.

Magnify the Bible in family worship

You may use a “daily devotional” book of some sort, but do not substitute it for the Bible. Read some portion of Holy Scripture from the Bible during the worship period.

You can vary the method of Bible reading, if you wish. One person may read all the scripture passage, with a different family member reading at each worship period. You could go around the family circle with each one reading one verse or one paragraph. The important thing is to read the Bible aloud, in the hearing of the family, as each one follows in his own Bible.

You may go through a book of the Bible over a period of time reading consecutive chapters each day. You may take a subject and trace it through the Bible by use of a good concordance or other study guide. You might read the same passage out of different versions of the Bible (if you have them available). You may read an Old Testament prophecy and its New Testament fulfillment. There are many ways to read the Bible in family worship.

Someone has made this suggestion concerning Bible study: “Read it through; think it over; pray it in; work it out; and pass it on.” That is a good suggestion. Read the Bible and talk about what it says and how that applies to your situation. Magnify the Bible in your family worship.

Some homes do not have a Bible for each member of the family. If that is your case, provide one for each one. Do without a luxury to buy a Bible. Postpone a necessity and buy a Bible. Let each member of your family be able to speak of “my Bible.” It will be worth the cost, whatever it is, to provide a Bible for each member of the family.

Give time to prayer in family worship

That may be the most difficult part for some. Some people seldom pray. Many others never pray aloud. Great numbers who pray privately have never prayed where another could hear. Particularly, many who lead in public prayer have never prayed aloud in their

homes. Some people find it very difficult to pray before their family. Yet, prayer is very important in family worship in the home.

How can we “break the ice” in beginning family prayer? (1) Practice praying aloud in private when no one but God can hear. You will get accustomed to hearing your voice speak to God. (2) Begin with short prayers, but keep them sincere, until you get more accustomed to praying before the family. (3) Use a “sentence prayer” method by which you go around the group and each person expresses a word of thanks to God for blessings received or a brief petition for needs observed. (4) Seek out prayers that are recorded in the Bible and read one of them before God as the expression of your heart. You might consider Psalm 90, Psalm 84, Psalm 86, Psalm 71, and like passages for your “scripture prayers.” (5) You might have periods of silent prayer in which each one is free to express his own thoughts to God, but do not resort to silent prayer alone. Your family members need to hear one another pray. (6) You might assign one of the family members to pray in the next worship period, and let him give thought in advance (even making notes, if necessary) about what to say to God in behalf of the family. (7) You might use a book of prayers, and there are many available in book stores, provided you are careful to be very reverent in making the written prayer the true statement of your heart. You can work at the matter of prayer in family worship and make it truly meaningful.

Make your prayers brief, of course, particularly if you have small children. Let the children pray also, even those who are very small and do not understand all that is involved. Be sure you pray **for** one another, and neither **to** nor **against** one another. Talk directly to God, and your prayers will be sufficient.

Include praise in family worship

God never intended worship to be dull and lifeless. He speaks in Scripture about coming into His courts with thanksgiving and singing. He speaks of clapping the hands and lifting up the hands in worship. Let your family worship in the home be a glad occasion to be looked forward to and not a dull occasion to be dreaded.

How can you include praise in your family worship? Consider these suggestions. (1) Sing as a part of your home worship service. If you have a musician in the family, so much the better, but if not, sing anyway. Even if you are not gifted with a musical talent, “*make a joyful noise unto the Lord*” (see Psalm 149:5). (2) Testify to the family about the blessings of God upon you, your business, your church, your associates, your home, etc. Let them speak of blessings from God they have witnessed. (3) Smile as you talk about the Lord God. Show by word and expression that it is a privilege to know Him and live in daily fellowship with Him. (4) Never use the family worship time to rebuke misdeeds nor “preach at” a family member for the purpose of correction of wrong doing. (5) Fill your heart with thanksgiving and joy throughout the day, and it will overflow when you worship with the family. You can make your family worship in the home a time of joy and praise if you give thought and effort to it.

Here are four suggestions on how to make your family worship in the home a meaningful period of spiritual profit. (1) Prepare for the worship period. (2) Magnify the Bible in your worship. (3) Give time for meaningful prayer. (4) Include praise and thanksgiving. Work by this pattern, adding other items according to your preference, and enjoy the blessings which follow.

THE PROMISED BLESSINGS OF WORSHIP IN THE HOME

We Americans are very prone to examine a matter from the “profit and loss” viewpoint. A selfish spirit will enquire, “What do I get out of it?” A more noble person will ask, “What good comes from it?” It is not surprising, therefore, if question is raised concerning the benefit of worship in the home. “What good does it do?”

The Bible makes it quite clear that good does come when a family gathers in privacy of the home and meets with God in Bible reading, prayer, and other forms of worship. This fourth in our series of studies on “Worship in the Home” will present some of the blessings which may be expected when a family worships together each day.

Presence of God

Worship in the home brings the blessing of the personal presence of God. Hear these words of Jesus: *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*” Matthew 18:20.

What a blessed promise! Did you catch the thrust of it? Jesus will be personally present in the home and with the family that “gathers together” in His name.

Someone might ask, “But that refers to believers gathering at church, does it not?” I reply, “Not just at church. You see, the earliest Christians had no church buildings in which to meet. They generally met in small groups in private homes where they studied the Bible, sang praises to God, offered up their prayers, and worshiped God. Jesus said the gathering did not have to be large; it only had to be in His name. Wherever God’s people meet to worship and pray, He is there, even if no more than two or three are involved. That is the promise!”

Jesus did not say, “My peace shall be there,” nor “My joy shall be there,” nor “My blessings shall be there.” He said, “I shall be there, right in the midst of them.”

Take note that the promise of Matthew 18:20 is set in a context of prayer. God’s special promise is not that He is present any time two or three get together for any purpose, but any time they get together for the purpose of prayer.

Are you aware of a need for the presence and help of God in your home? Gather the family to worship and pray in the home. He has promised to be personally present right in the midst of such a gathering.

Power in prayer

Worship in the home brings the blessing of power in prayer. Examine Matthew 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.”*

What a promise! I have shared it with people across the country for many years and have seen God honor it again and again. I have seen children saved after Daddy and Mother had claimed their salvation on the basis of that promise of God. I have seen homes reunited after the promise was claimed. I have seen churches revived and renewed because God honored the promise He made as His believing children claimed it and prayed. It can happen to you. You can claim that promise in your family worship.

It does not take a great number of people to claim God’s promise and get answers to prayer. Read Matthew 18: 19-20 and note the relationship of the prayer promise and the promise of His presence: *“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. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* You can claim God’s promise to answer prayer when you pray in your family worship periods. If no more than two family members

agree on a specific petition to God, He will answer. Imagine what that will do to the spirit of your worship in the home when you see God's answers to your prayers!

Let your children hear their parents pray. Let your children recognize God's provision in response to prayer. The reality of answered prayer will follow them all the days of their lives as a result of such worship in the home.

Provision of spiritual needs

Worship in the home brings the provision of spiritual needs of the home. Jesus said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,*" Matthew 4:4. That statement does not deny the need for bread in order to live, but it recognizes that the need for the Word that goes forth out of the mouth of God is as important to the spirit as the food which nourishes the physical body. Worship in the home provides the spiritual food which your family desperately needs.

Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst,*" John 6:35. Neglect of spiritual nourishment is as serious an offence as neglect of physical sustenance. Concerning both, the spiritual and physical, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel,*" I Timothy 5:8.

Consider these words, written by the Apostle Paul to a young preacher, "*Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that **from a child** thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,*" II Timothy 3: 13-14. Where did Timothy learn the holy scripture as a child? Paul explains, "*I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also,*" II Timothy 1:6. Timothy was the man that he was because his mother and grandmother had taught him the Holy Scriptures while he was a lad in the home.

Let your children have the blessed inheritance of a home where God is recognized and worshiped each day in the family circle.

Continuing influence

Worship in the home brings the blessing of continuing influence. Do you want your children to grow up to be honorable men and women throughout all of life? Proverbs 22:6 tells how: "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*"

God intends for salvation to include all your household. "*For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,*" Acts 2:39. Like Cornelius, you can believe in God with your kinsmen and near friends (Acts 10:24). Like the Philippian jailer, you can believe in God with all your house (Acts 16:34). Do not sell short your privilege of bringing the reality of God to every member of your family.

A certain lady called her pastor and invited him to come with his family and share lunch with her after worship on Sunday. She gave this reason for her somewhat insistent invitation, "I remember as a child how it impressed me when the pastor came for Sunday dinner and spent the afternoon visiting in our home. I want my children to have those same memories." It is no

wonder that every child in that family grew up to be a faithful Christian. Such impressions from childhood remain through all of life.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AT WORSHIP IN THE HOME

Everything has its enemies. You will find your highest ambitions and purest motives tested and challenged. You will find your sincere resolves resisted by Satan. Only by diligent effort will your resolutions bear fruit. Anything worth having is worth protecting.

That principle applies particularly in the area of worship in the home. You will encounter problems as you seek to follow through on your resolve to have a time of daily meeting with God with all the members of your family. Satan knows that practice, if continued consistently, will greatly fortify you and members of your family in your commitment to God. He will resist it with all his power, trying to get you to give it up by putting problems in your way. Worship in the home is so important it is worth protecting.

Let us review some of the problems commonly faced by families who have resolved to meet God each day in a time of family worship. Some problems are almost universally experienced. I can deal with them. You must ask God to give you help in areas particularly peculiar to your personal situation.

Limited time

There will be the problem of finding time when all the family is available to worship together. That is particularly true in the way many families are fragmented in today's society. If the father and mother both work outside the home, often at different places, and the children are in school, it may present a problem. Or, if the father is on shift work so that his hours do not coincide with the rest of the family schedule, it may present a problem. But the problem must be faced and dealt with so as to find a solution.

Here are some suggestions. (1) Select the time of day when all the family can be present most conveniently. It may be early morning, at noon, supper time, just before bed, or at other times. Do not feel locked in to a certain time period. I personally prefer the morning hour, but that is not the only time the family can worship together. (2) Hold a family conference, review the schedule of every member of the family, and work out an appropriate time. It may be difficult, but it will not be impossible to arrange a time if you are truly committed to having family worship. (3) Guard the time set. Once you have agreed upon a time, let nothing other than an absolute emergency interfere with it. Schedule other affairs, business or social, around it. (4) Change your present schedule, if necessary, to make a time available. Father could ask his employer to let him work on another shift. He could close the store an hour earlier, or open it an hour later. The family could get up a half-hour earlier, or stay up a half-hour later at night. Remember the old adage, "Where there is a will, there is a way." (5) Ask God to help. If there seems to be no possible way for the family to get together, let them ask God to make it possible. He is in charge of all things and can do whatever needs to be done for the sake of His people. Do not give up; you can find a time for all the family to worship God together.

Uncooperative members

There may be the problem of uncooperative members of your family. Some member of your family may not want to participate. An unsaved father or mother might rebel. A backslidden or spiritually immature member of the family might hesitate. A teenager might

draw back. How can an uncooperative member be dealt with in the right way?

(1) Invite each member of the family to share the worship period. Notice that I said “invite” each one to participate. Be careful that your invitation does not turn into nagging, accusation, or an explosion of temper. You can require the children to participate, but others must be encouraged to do so. If a family member refuses, go ahead in the worship without him.

(2) Go ahead and worship with those family members who will cooperate. That might be a little more difficult, but it should be done. For instance, the father of the home should be the leader in family worship. If he will not, or if he cannot, the mother must take over and do it. Do not discipline all because one will not cooperate. Be careful, too, that you do not use the worship period (or the prayer period in worship) to condemn the one who is not participating. Pray for him with a spirit of loving concern.

(3) Do not close out an uncooperative member. Keep the door of welcome open so the can join at any time. Invite him once and again, with a kind and loving concern. When he comes to join, make no ado over it, but quietly include him in the worship experience.

(4) Ask God to help. As you pray for all the needs of the home, ask your heavenly Father to work in the life of the unsaved or backslidden member of the family. Quiet, confident prayer will work wonders.

The uncooperative member of your family will be enlisted if you are loving, patient, prayerful, and consistent.

Unavoidable interruptions

There will be problems of interruptions during the worship period. The telephone will surely ring. (The devil will cause someone to dial the wrong number, if nothing else, in order to disturb your devotions.) Often the doorbell will ring. Small children will make noises. What can be done to handle such interruptions?

(1) Appoint one member of the family to respond to the telephone or doorbell, while others go ahead with the worship.

(2) Make allowances for young children. They will squirm, want a drink of water, want to go play, etc. Take care of water and rest room needs before you begin your worship period. Then train the child to wait until worship is over. Teach him that you are meeting with God there in your home.

Daily consistency

There may be a problem of consistency day after day. The “new” will soon “wear off” and disinterest might creep in. What can be done to keep the worship vital at such a time?

I suggest: (1) Vary the order of your worship period, putting in something new and interesting. (2) Vary the place of your worship, moving out in the yard in good weather, or moving to another part of the house. (3) Vary the leadership of your worship, letting a different family member lead it from day to day. (4) Consider your worship time as an appointment with God. Do it not as a duty to be endured, but a privilege to be enjoyed. (5) Worship with your family because you need it, even though at times you may not particularly enjoy it. When the winds of inspiration are blowing, lift the sails of faith and flow with them. When the winds of inspiration are calm, take out the oars of your will and row with all your might. You and your family need the discipline and the delight of a daily meeting with God.

And now, perform the doing of it. In these five studies, we have seen the Bible basis for worship in the home, the human need for worship in the home, the practical method for worship in the home, some blessings for worship in the home, and some problems in worship in the

home. It is not enough to hear it; we must do it. Begin today. Worship with your family in your home.