

# westgatechurch

April 24, 2020

Dear Westgate Church Family,

Over the past several weeks, all of us have adjusted our habits and routines in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep ourselves and others safe. One significant change most of us have made involves much more time at home. With events and gatherings cancelled and work shifted to home offices for many of us, we have begun to establish new routines, few of which involve leaving the house. For this reason, we wanted to reach out to encourage each of you to pursue time worshipping the Lord in your home by reading scripture, praying, and singing. This is often referred to as family worship and it is complementary to congregational worship.

**Why Family Worship?** Scripture makes clear that time focused on the Lord should not be limited to Sunday mornings, or gatherings in a sanctuary. Instead, they ought to be part of the rhythms of our lives. Consider Deuteronomy 6:4-7, *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."* Worship ought to characterize our routines and our relationships every day, not just on Sunday. It is a blessing to those in our lives and a right posture before God. It invests in spiritual formation and reminds us of our joy in Christ. Sadly, however, for many Christians, these are things confined to worship services and other church gatherings.

Right now we have more time together at home than at any other point in our typically over-scheduled lives. We aren't going to soccer tournaments, to town meetings, or on business trips. We are home and we have a chance to establish or further develop good habits of family worship. Let us use this time well, for our joy, and for the glory of God.

**What should we do?** Family worship will take different shapes depending on your circumstances. Homes with young children will use their time differently than homes with teenagers. Those who live alone will need to connect with family for worship on platforms like Zoom. In addition to reading scripture, praying together, and singing, some will read and discuss Christian books, catechisms, Christian periodicals, etc. Consider those in your home. How can you invest in their spiritual formation through family worship?

**How should we start?** For some, this is an intimidating idea. However, we encourage you to consider how this effort might bless you and those you love. Pray about it. Then set a time to gather. Start small. Choose a Psalm, or a chapter from a familiar book of scripture. Read it aloud and discuss it together. No one needs to preach a sermon. Instead, let the passage guide your conversation. Pray together, glorify God, express gratitude together. And sing. This might be the most intimidating part. But our praise in song is part of what we were made for. Look up worship songs on YouTube, or search for familiar hymns. Let praise of our God be the foundation of your unity as a family.

We've collected [a list of resources](#) to help each household get started or go further. Please do not hesitate to reach out for encouragement, guidance, or prayer. Let's use our time at home to thrive, to treasure Christ, and to rejoice in his gospel.

In Christ,  
Bruce Daggett, Travis Vaclavik, and Drew Halberstadt

## INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY WORSHIP

- \* How Do You Do Family Worship?, Donald Whitney ([short video](#))
- \* Family Worship 101 with Donald Whitney, ([Five short videos](#)) - a free five-part training to lead family worship
- \* Family Worship 101, William Boekestein, Ligonier ([Blog post](#))
- \* *Family Worship*, Donald Whitney ([Crossway](#), [Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#)) – a short book (88 pages) introducing the practice of family worship.
- \* *Family Worship*, Joel R. Beeke ([Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#))- a short book (66 pages) helpful and motivating guide to implement or increase the depth of your family devotions
- \* *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*, Keith and Kristyn Getty ([Amazon](#)) - Chapter 5 of this book focuses on worship in the home.
- \* *Thoughts On Family Worship*, James Alexander ([Amazon](#))
- \* How Do You Do Family Devotions?, Interview with John Piper ([short audio with transcript](#))
- \* The Role of Family Worship, Interview with Tedd Tripp ([short audio with transcript](#)) - Tedd Tripp is the author of [Shepherding a Child's Heart](#) and [Instructing a Child's Heart](#).

## RESOURCES FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

- \* *The Family Worship Book*, Terry R. Johnson ([Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#)) - a resource book with recommended hymns, bible reading, prayers, etc
- \* *Family Worship Bible Guide*, ed. Joel R. Beeke ([Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#)) - discussion prompts for every chapter of the Bible
- \* *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, Sally Lloyd-Jones ([Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#)) - for families with young children
- \* *The Gospel Story Bible*, Marty Machowski ([Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#)) - for families with young children
- \* *The Big Picture Family Devotional*, Dave Helm ([Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#)) - for families with younger children and pre-teens
- \* How to Teach Your Teen to Study the Bible, Jen Wilken, The Gospel Coalition ([Blog post](#))
- \* Introducing New City Catechism, The Gospel Coalition ([Blog post](#))
- \* *The New City Catechism Devotional*, Colin Hansen ([Amazon](#))
- \* *The New City Catechism for Kids*, The Gospel Coalition ([Amazon](#))
- \* *Training Hearts, Teaching Minds: Family Devotions Based on the Shorter Catechism*, Starr Meade ([Amazon](#), [Christianbook](#))
- \* Bible Project weekly home Bible study guide (free [via email](#))