

10 IDEAS FOR BUSY FAMILIES TO DO FAMILY WORSHIP AND DEVOTIONS

Do you have Family Worship and Devotions? Some may answer, "I'd love to have Family Worship and Devotions. But what do I do? Where do I begin? We are so busy and often come home late from work. How can we find the time?" Well, the following are some ideas and suggestions to get you started.

First find the Scripture verses that suit your family best. It's good to start with a daily reading of these verses. Then, perhaps once a week, try to do something different or special – this can be in the form of a simple bible quiz, memory verse quiz, bible board game, a short testimony or sharing, or just worship with songs and actions. Be creative. Try not to make it into a routine for then it can become boring. Always read the Word with faith and expectancy, believing that God will speak to you and guide you along.

Remember, do not think that you always need to have a certain amount of time before you can do devotions. Do with whatever time you have. For e.g., if it is already very late, you can start with a worship song followed by a short prayer related to the song's message. It is not the just the amount of time spent. It is the regularity in which you spend time with God. If there is a choice between having family devotions of 30 minutes twice a week and having devotions for, say, 10 minutes every night, we would certainly prefer the latter. Surely we can all afford to set aside ten minutes each day for God. So why hesitate? Start tonight.

1. READ THROUGH A BOOK OF THE BIBLE

The New Testament is a good place to start reading the Bible. You can start with one of the Gospels, reading from the beginning till the end. With little children, only read a few Scriptures each day, and leave out the passages that may be too difficult for them to understand. Use a modern version of the Bible or a Children's Bible that is easier to understand. Ask the children questions as you go along as children love to answer questions. It also keeps them focused and attentive knowing that they have to answer after reading. It also helps parents to know if their children understand what is being read to them.

For older children, it is possible to read a whole chapter each day. It's good to pass the Bible around for each person to read a few verses until the end of the chapter. This helps everyone to stay interested. When they have finished reading the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation, get them to start all over again from the beginning.

2. DAILY DEVOTIONS

There are many books available at Christian bookshops that are suitable for daily devotions. Some are organized according to the books of the Bible (e.g. Genesis 1), while some are organized according to subject matter for that week (e.g. Patience). Choose the ones that are suitable for you and your children. You can get some ideas on what books to get by looking at the reverse side of this leaflet, which shows a list of books that have been used by some parents in their daily family devotions.

3. READ VERSES ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS

A good exercise for the parent, either father or mother, would be to read through the book of Proverbs and write each scripture under the appropriate heading, e.g. Diligence, Laziness, Wisdom, Honesty, Handling Money, Adultery and so on. Keep these in a folder. You can read the verses on the appropriate subject matter when doing your devotions.

4. WISDOM FROM READING PROVERBS

For older children, you can also read a chapter of Proverbs with them each day. There are 31 chapters in Proverbs, so it takes about a month to finish it. In this way, we can continually fill our children with practical wisdom.

5. SCRIPTURE FINDING

For children who can already read, you can at times play this game with them. Each child must have his/her own Bible. Choose some suitable Scriptures for that day's devotion. Call out the reference of the Scripture and get the children to look it up in the Bible to see who can find it first. Then read it and explain it to the family. In this way, we can train the children how to look up the Bible, be focused and try to understand what they have read when they explain the verses.

6. MEMORY VERSE

You can learn a verse together as a family each week. Choose a memory verse for the family at the beginning of the week. Recite it together daily. Write it up on cards and stick them in the room. Also put them in the children's pockets. Alternatively, each morning when they are eating their breakfast and vitamins, get them to read one verse for e.g., from the "Daily Scripture calendar" and have them memorize it. By the end of the week, everyone in the family should be able to recite the verse from memory.

Here are some good memory verses to learn as a family: Psalms 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7, John 3:16, Romans 3:23, Romans 16:19, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 3:23.

7. SONGS NIGHT

Choose 1 or 2 songs to sing and praise the Lord. You can do this by playing the guitar, or piano or using CDs as an accompaniment. There are many CDs available in the Christian bookshops or in the church library that are suitable for praise and worship with children. Some songs are based on Bible verses e.g. Trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6), Seek Ye First (Matthew 7:7). A good way to get all to participate is to take turns to sing each verse of the song. After singing, briefly discuss with your children the meaning of the lyrics in case they don't understand.

8. TV NIGHT

Children love to watch TV, and a lot of them remember things from what they see. Instead of watching whatever's on TV, why not let them watch VCDs that teach good values based on Scripture. There are many VCDs available in the Christian bookshops or in the church library which are a favourite with a lot of children; for instance, the 'Veggie Tales' series, 'Adventures in Odyssey' series, 'Beginner's Bible' series, 'Kingdom under the Sea' series, 'Donut Man' series, and so on. Watch the VCD with your children. Make some notes on points for discussion. After the show, discuss the show with your children, bringing in suitable Scripture references that the show was based on.

9. GAMES NIGHT

Children also love to play games. Instead of playing any games they like, you could get them to play board games like Bibleopoly, Bible Trivia, Go Tell it on the Mountain, etc. Game times and also the themes in these games are good for conversation and discussions too.

10. PRAYERS

You have to teach your children to pray! We should not let our busy schedules prevent us from connecting with God. It is good to pray each day after worship and devotion. As a parent, it is our greatest responsibility to do so, to ensure that our families know how to talk to God. James 5:16 says "the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective". One of the best ways to build a spiritual heritage as a family is by recording your prayers and God's answers to those prayers. You can do this in a Prayer Journal.

Apart from your personal requests each day, you can also assign specific days to pray for others. For instance, on Mondays we pray for missionaries, on Tuesdays we pray for the church, on Wednesdays we pray for world peace, on Thursdays we pray for our country, on Fridays we pray for those unsaved friends and relatives we know, on Saturdays we pray for the sick and on Sundays we pray for our families.

Don't forget to pray each day after your worship and devotion. Pray together as a family and also get everyone to pray, even the little ones.

The above are just some ideas to help you get started with Family Worship and Devotions. You will probably think of lots more ideas as you go along. Lastly, ask God for wisdom and guidance to establish this habit in your family and to keep it faithfully. May God bless you and your family as you grow together as a true Family of God!