

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Mark by William Hendriksen, Kent Hughes, and John Blanchard

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Mark 2:1-4 Then they came to Him...

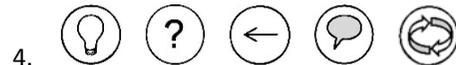
Notes (See back page for authors)
Jesus' ministry in Mark's gospel account contains many accounts of miracles. Over and over, those who observe are astounded (v.12). Yet, not all are astounded. Many are opposed to Jesus, His teaching, AND His miracles. Hendriksen says, *Chapter 1 is the chapter of glory; chapter 2, of opposition.*

This first account contains both. (v7, 12). A paralysed man's friends bring him to Jesus. Having heard of this miracle worker, they desire healing for their friend. But the house where Jesus is meeting is too crowded, so they go up on the roof, dig or tear through the roof and lower their friend down. *What a picture!*, Hughes notes. *Above, with the light streaming past them in dusty beams, four sweaty, impish, determined faces; below, the Pharisees and scribes shaking dirt from their robes; and in the midst, the Prince and the paralytic.*

Blanchard suggests *you may find yourself in that position at times, wondering just how you can bring a friend to Christ. These [friends] were prepared to go to any length to bring their [friend] to Christ... What an example to you as a Christian!*

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What 2 things are seen in this miracle?
2. What did the friends do for their paralysed friend?
3. What do you think will happen to the paralysed man?



Praise Pray Psalm 89a²

1. Commit you and your family in prayer to bring friends to Jesus, by God's help
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Mark 2:23-28 Who's Sabbath is it?

Notes (See back page for authors)
Conflict. Conflict. Conflict. It seems that the Jewish leaders just went from one objection toward Jesus to another. Now, as Jesus' disciples are walking with Him through a grain field, they pick some heads of grain and eat the kernels. What are they doing?! The Pharisees ask.

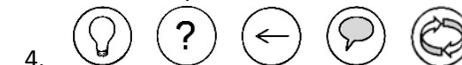
Hendriksen notes that *the rabbis [had] drawn up a catalogue of thirty-nine principal works, subsequently subdivided into six minor categories under each of these thirty-nine, all of which were forbidden on the Sabbath? In accordance with this list was not plucking heads of grain reaping?... Obviously, what was happening was that Christ's enemies were burying the real law of God...under the mountain of their man-made, foolish traditions.*

Jesus shows them that if David could do what was ordinarily not allowed under the Law and it not be a violation of the law because it was necessary, then His disciples could certainly do what was not even a violation of the Law to satisfy their hunger.

Blanchard says to note *what Jesus added in verse 28! God has given you one day in seven as a special day of rest and worship. Look up Christ's own example of Luke 4:16, and then notice God's command in Heb. 10:25. Make sure you join a good church and spend God's day in God's way!*

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What do the Pharisees complain about here?
2. Were the disciples breaking God's law?
3. Whose Day is the Sabbath and what is the Sabbath for?



Praise Pray Psalm 89a

1. Pray that you and your family will delight to rest and worship on Jesus' Day, with God's help
2. Pray for your family
3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

Reading Mark 2:18-22 Fasting without Jesus

Notes (See back page for authors) While Jesus and these “sinners” were feasting, John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. (We’re not sure these two are at the same time, but it seems likely from Mark’s account.) Some people came and asked Jesus why his disciples weren’t fasting too.

Hughes notes that *the Scriptures commanded fasting only once a year (on the Day of Atonement, which was a national day of repentance and forgiveness, Leviticus 16:24). But by Jesus’ time, the Pharisees had decreed that godly people should fast twice a week (on the second and fifth days—Mondays and Thursdays)... They actually whitened their faces, put ashes on their heads, wore their clothes in shoddy disarray, refused to wash, and looked as forlorn as possible.*

But, Jesus says, “The wedding guests cannot fast while the groom is with them, can they?” Hendriksen comments that *Jesus here compares his blessed presence on earth with a wedding-feast...Bridegroom’s attendants fasting while the feast is in progress! How absurd, says Jesus as it were...[instead Jesus shows that] the new wine of rescue and riches for all who are willing to accept these blessings, even for publicans and sinners, must be poured into new, that is, fresh, strong wineskins of gratitude, freedom, and spontaneous service to the glory of God.*

While Christians may still fast today (see Acts 13:3) seeking God’s guidance or answers to particular prayers, our lives are to be ordinarily full of joy if we are full of Jesus.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What fasting was commanded in the Old Testament?
 2. Why didn’t Jesus disciples fast?
 3. Whether feasting or fasting, what should we be full of?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 89a
1. Rejoice with your family in the joy Jesus gives
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Mark 2:1-12 Who can forgive sins...?

Notes (See back page for authors) As these men lowered their friend in front of Jesus, He responded in a way they likely did not expect. They thought Jesus would heal their friend so he could walk. Jesus noted their active faith. But instead of healing the man, Jesus said, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Hughes notes that *this was a calculatedly outrageous statement. From our perspective it seems cruel. Here is a wretched paralytic, barely able to raise his head, hoping for a cure, and Christ says, “Your sins are forgiven.” From the Pharisees’ perspective, this was blasphemy, for only God could forgive sins.*

Blanchard notes that *the scribes were quite right to say that only God could forgive sin – but what they did not realise was that Jesus is God! Jesus is God! Jesus can forgive sins – which is even more important than being healed.*

Hendriksen comments that *Jesus never took sin lightly. He never told people, “Do you have a sense of guilt? Forget about it.” On the contrary, he regarded sin as inexcusable departure from God’s holy law (Mark 12:29, 30), as having a soul-choking effect (4:19; cf. John 8:34), and as being a matter of the heart and not only of the outward deed (Mark 7:6, 7, 15–23. But he also offered the only true solution. And to show He had the power to forgive sins, he demonstrated the power to make a paralysed man walk. And, notes Hughes, as he went home, he bore something far more impressive than his bed. It was a clean heart.*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What did the friends expect Jesus to do?
 2. What did Jesus do?
 3. Are your sins forgiven by Jesus?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 89a
1. Confess your sins, with your family, and rejoice if you KNOW Jesus’ forgiveness
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Mark 2:13-14 Follow me!

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Jesus continues through the area. Hendriksen comments that *it is not surprising that out of an uncomfortably crowded house (2:2) the Master made his way to the pleasant and refreshing breezes of the shore. But as soon as the people knew where he was they started to gather around him again... He, in turn, did not ask them to leave but started to teach them.* After this teaching, Jesus sees Levi (also known as Matthew) sitting at his tax office or booth.

Hughes notes that *the Romans collected their taxes through a system called "tax farming" (similar to farming out franchises such as McDonald's fast-food restaurants). They assessed a district a fixed tax figure, and then sold the right to collect taxes to the highest bidder. The buyer had to hand over the assessed figure at the end of the year and could keep whatever he gathered above that...The system fostered exploitation by the arbitrary power of the tax gatherers.*

So, these tax collectors were despised by other Jews. Yet, Jesus had other plans for Levi. He called him to follow him. And, what did Levi do? Blanchard says *as soon as Jesus called him, Levi 'got up and followed Him' (v.14). He could never have guessed what lay ahead, but he was prepared to trust Jesus for every step of life's journey, whatever the cost.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What did Jesus call Levi to do?
2. What did Levi do?
3. Can you trust Jesus and follow Him, whatever the cost?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 89a
1. Pray that you and your family will follow Jesus, whatever the cost, with God's help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Mark 2:13-17 Eating with sinners

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Levi got up, left everything, and followed Jesus. As he did, the news spread quickly and it seems Levi invited many of his friends (a despised man will have, of course, despised friends) to a feast with him and Jesus. Obviously Levi wanted to honour Jesus and wanted his friends to meet Jesus.

The religious leaders were scandalised. How dare this man, who claims to be good (and even claims to be God) eat with these sinners! Hughes says *it's possible for us to live out such beliefs too. We come to Christ, and in our desire to be godly we seek out people "like us." Ultimately we arrange our lives so that we are with nonbelievers as little as possible. We attend Bible studies that are 100 percent Christian, a Sunday school that is 100 percent Christian, prayer meetings that are 100 percent Christian. We play tennis with Christians and eat dinner with Christians. We have Christian doctors, Christian dentists, Christian plumbers, Christian veterinarians, and even our dogs are Christian. The result is, we pass by hundreds without ever noticing them or positively influencing them for Christ. None of us are Pharisees philosophically, but we may be practically.*

Ouch! But do I eat with sinners? Do I seek to bring them to meet Jesus at a meal I prepare for them? Do I bring the sin-sick people I know (if I don't know any, why not, and what am I doing about it?) to meet the Great Physician who can heal their soul?

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why did Levi prepare a meal for his friends and Jesus?
2. How might we be like the Pharisees?
3. How can we introduce sinner friends to Jesus?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 89a
1. Pray with your family that you will bring sinners to Jesus
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member