

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](http://frankstonrp.org.au) [bit.ly/WTrpcaf](http://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](http://airdrierpcs.org)

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. [bit.ly/WkBbl](http://bit.ly/WkBbl) or [bit.ly/3yrBbl](http://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 all taken from John Stott’s commentary on Acts entitled *The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts*.

# 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** Acts 25:23-26:3 Pomp and Paul

**Notes**  
(Notes this week are all taken from John Stott's commentary on Acts entitled The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts)

*Herod Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa I of Acts 12 and the great grandson of Herod the Great. Bernice was his sister, and rumours were rife that their relationship was incestuous...*

*It was a dramatic moment when the holy and humble apostle of Jesus Christ stood before this representative of the worldly, ambitious, morally corrupt family of the Herods, who for generation after generation had set themselves in opposition to truth and righteousness... But Paul was not in the least intimidated...*

*Agrippa and Bernice would have on their purple robes of royalty and the gold circlet of the crown on their brows. Doubtless Festus, to do honour to the occasion, had donned the scarlet robe which a governor wore on state occasions. ...When they had taken their seats, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. According to tradition, he was only a little fellow and unprepossessing in appearance, balding, with beetle brows, hooked nose and bandy legs, yet 'full of grace'. Wearing neither crown nor gown, but only handcuffs and perhaps a plain prisoner's tunic, he nevertheless dominated the court with his quiet Christlike dignity and confidence.*

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who was Agrippa and why was Paul speaking to him?
2. Why would Paul have been confident?
3. How did Paul begin his defence?

4.     

**Praise** Psalm 146a<sup>2</sup>

- Pray**
1. Pray for confidence when defending your faith
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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** Acts 26:27-32 I wish all were as I am except for chains

**Notes**  
(Notes this week are all taken from John Stott's commentary on Acts entitled The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts)

*Agrippa is unhorsed [by Paul's direct question]. Too embarrassed to give Paul a direct answer to a direct question, and too proud to allow him to dictate the topic of their dialogue, he takes evasive action with an ambiguous counter-question.*

**Agrippa to Paul:** 'Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?' (v.28).

*The court gasps again. That was a clever riposte, by which the king regained the initiative. A murmur went round the audience as people discussed exactly what he meant. It was 'variously represented as a trivial jest, a bitter sarcasm, a grave irony, a burst of anger, and an expression of sincere conviction'. How would Paul respond?*

**Paul to Agrippa** (in no doubt how he will interpret the king's words, and determined to exploit them for the gospel): 'Short time or long - I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains' (v.29).

*With those words Paul lifted his hands and rattled the chains which bound him. He was sincere, the prisoner Paul. He really believed what he was talking about. He wanted everybody to be like him, including the king-everybody a Christian, but nobody a prisoner.*

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How and why does Agrippa reply to Paul?
2. How and why does Paul reply to Agrippa?
3. Do we want everybody to become a Christian (really)?

4.     

**Praise** Psalm 146a  
**Pray**

1. Pray that God might use you to help others become a Christian
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

Acts 26:24-27 Festus: You're crazy!

**Notes**  
(Notes this week are all taken from John Stott's commentary on Acts entitled The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts)

*In the place of an orderly summing up to conclude the trial, Luke records a most unorthodox altercation between the bench and the dock. Its high drama may be captured best if it is set forth as a dialogue:*

**Festus to Paul** (who at this point interrupted Paul's defence and shouted): 'You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane' (v.24).

**Paul to Festus** (replying to him with great composure and dignity): 'I am not insane, most excellent Festus. What I am saying is true and reasonable (v.25). The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner' (v.26), or 'has been no hole-and-corner business'.

**Paul to Agrippa** (boldly confronting the king, of whom he has just been speaking to Festus in the third person): 'King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do' (v.27).

*The court gasps. Has any prisoner ever before presumed to address His Royal Highness with such impertinence?*

## Questions

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What and why did Festus say to Paul?
2. What and why did Paul reply to Festus?
3. What and why did Paul say to Agrippa?

4.     

## Praise Pray

Psalms 146a

1. Pray for confidence when defending your faith
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

## Reading

Acts 26:4-11 Paul: Opposing the Name of Jesus

**Notes**  
(Notes this week are all taken from John Stott's commentary on Acts entitled The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts)

*First, the apostle describes his upbringing as a Pharisee. Saul must have been a familiar figure in Jerusalem when as a young man he sat at the feet of Rabbi Gamaliel (22:3). He is likely to have gained a reputation for scholarship, righteousness and religious zeal. Many Palestinian Jews still alive knew how he had lived as a child, first in Tarsus, then in Jerusalem. More than that, they had known him personally and could testify from their own experience that he had belonged to the strictest party in Judaism, that of the Pharisees (v.4-5)... The twelve tribes were still eagerly expecting the fulfilment of this promise [of the Messiah]. But [Paul] believed it had already been fulfilled in Jesus, whose resurrection was the proof of his Messiahship and the pledge of our resurrection too.*

*Saul the Pharisee was convinced that it was his solemn duty to oppose the name and the claims of Jesus of Nazareth as those of an impostor... He began his persecuting programme in Jerusalem. Armed with authority from the chief priests, he not only imprisoned many disciples of Jesus, but even, when they were sentenced to death, cast his vote against them... He tried by force to make them blaspheme (the phrase indicates that he by no means always succeeded), and in his obsession' (RSV, 'in raging fury') he pursued them even to 'foreign cities'.*

## Questions

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why was Paul being accused?
2. What had Paul's first interactions with Christianity been like?
3. How could such a sinner become a Christian?

4.     

## Praise Pray

Psalms 146a

1. Consider and weep over your former sins, rejoice in forgiveness from the Lord.
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Acts 26:12-18 The Damascus road

**Notes**  
(Notes this week are all taken from John Stott's commentary on Acts entitled The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts)

*Damascus was one of the 'foreign cities' to which Paul travelled, equipped with a high priestly extradition order. But before he reached his destination the divine intervention took place. A heavenly light, more brilliant than the sun at noon, flashed round him and his companions. Together they fell to the ground. Then a voice, addressing Paul in Aramaic, asked why he was persecuting him.*

*To the anonymous voice's question 'Why are you persecuting me?' Saul responded with the counter-question 'Who are you that I am persecuting?' Although his addition 'Lord' does not necessarily mean more than 'Sir', yet the fact that Paul introduces Jesus' reply with the words 'the Lord replied', so that kyrie and kyrios stand together in Luke's text, suggests that it did mean more. Surely, when the heavenly voice declared, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' at least two truths must have registered instantly in Saul's consciousness. The first is that the crucified Jesus was alive and had thus been vindicated, and the second that the Jesus who identified himself so closely with the Christians that to persecute them was to persecute him, must regard them as being peculiarly his own people.*

*In Paul's account to Agrippa of what happened on the Damascus road, however, what he stressed was not his conversion, but his commissioning, not his becoming a disciple of Jesus, but his appointment to be an apostle.*

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What happened as Paul was going to Damascus?
2. Why did Jesus say Paul was persecuting Him?
3. What did Jesus appoint Paul to be?

4.     

**Praise** Psalm 146a

- Pray**
1. Pray for those Jesus has appointed as leaders in your church
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Acts 26:19-23 I was not disobedient

**Notes**  
(Notes this week are all taken from John Stott's commentary on Acts entitled The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts)

*Christ's commission of Saul took the form of three verbs all in the first person singular of direct speech, although respectively in the past, future and present tenses: 'I have appeared to you', 'I will rescue you' and 'I am sending you'.*

*Paul now turns from Christ's commission to his response to it, and in describing this he replaces narrative with a direct address to Agrippa. Paul begins his statement with a double negative: I was not disobedient. How could he have been? The vision was evidently from heaven, and it was overwhelming. His fanatical opposition was overcome in a moment, and his secret doubts resolved. Christ had appeared to him and commissioned him; his obedience corresponded precisely to the charge he had received. First in Damascus, next In Jerusalem and Judea, then also to the Gentiles, he announced the good news and called on people to repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds (v.20)...*

*As the gospel centres on Christ's atonement, resurrection and proclamation (through his witnesses), the resurrection is seen to be indispensable. Paul kept on referring to it during his trials, not in order to provoke the Pharisees and Sadducees into argument, nor only to show that he was faithful to the Jewish tradition, but because the resurrection of Jesus was the beginning and pledge of the new creation, and so at the very heart of the gospel.*

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What was Paul's commission from Jesus?
2. How did Paul respond to this commission?
3. What is at the very heart of the gospel?

4.     

**Praise** Psalm 146a

- Pray**
1. Rejoice in prayer that Christ rose from the dead for you
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member