

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 Jeremiah by John Calvin and Phillip Ryken, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible

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 Jeremiah 29:1-7 Seek the peace...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

The exile has begun. Many from Jerusalem have been carried away captive to Babylon. God gives a message to Jeremiah for them. So, Jeremiah writes this message from the city of God, to faithful exiles in the city of Satan (Babylon).

Settle in. What?! You want us to settle in to this wicked city? Settle down here, where false gods are praised and worshipped? For us, living as pilgrims and strangers here, we might feel the same way. And while we are to keep ourselves unpolluted by the world, that is NOT the same thing as not being in the world.

Settle in. Plant gardens. Bear children. Raise them and marry them off too. It's going to be a while. (70 years). But don't just live your lives, praying for peace. Seek the peace of where God has put you. Pray for the place God has placed you. It can be too easy for us to withdraw from the world, huddle in our safe Christian environment, and hope God keeps us safe.

But God says our peace is, at least in part, connected to the peace of the place where He puts us. Are we praying for God's peace for Frankston? Melbourne? Victoria? Australia?

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What were the people in exile to do themselves?
2. How were they to pray for Babylon?
3. How can we be in the world but not of it?

4.     

Praise Psalm 93a²

Pray

1. Commit you and your family in prayer to seek God's peace for where you live, 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 Jeremiah 29:24-32 I did not send him

Notes
(See back page for authors)

This chapter ends with yet another false prophet. Shemaiah has written a letter to counter Jeremiah's letter. He claims Jeremiah is lying and should be arrested. God says to Shemaiah 1) I didn't send you and 2) I will punish you.

Again we are reminded that God emphasises in His word that not everyone who claims to speak in His name is telling the truth. Are we willing to spend the time and energy to know what God has said? Are we reading His word ourselves? Are we examining what is preached and taught by the Bible? Are we giving careful consideration to the creeds and confessions of the church that have been examined by the Bible and found to be a faithful and helpful instruction of God's word?

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What did Shemaiah claim about Jeremiah?
2. What did God claim about Shemaiah?
3. How do we know what God has said?

4.     

Praise
Pray

Psalm 93a

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to study God's word so you can better discern true teaching from false
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 Jeremiah 29:15-23 Sword, famine, plague

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Now God speaks to those who have remained behind in Jerusalem. It seems likely they thought they were spared from captivity because of their goodness.

But, God says, it will go badly. These who are bad, will find God's plans for them are for bad. They are bad, rotten, figs. (see chap. 24) God will bring on them such fierce destruction that the world will know that God is punishing them.

In particular, God singles out two false prophets who have been telling lies in God's name to God's people. (see 14:14) These two prophets, named after two kings of Israel and Judah, would become the basis for a curse.

As the HCSB notes mention, *Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah were two prophets singled out for committing adultery with their neighbors' wives as well as prophesying lies. There is a wordplay here. The name Kolaiah is related to the Hebrew term qelalah ("curse") and qalah ("to burn"). Thus they would roast in the fire. So heinous were their lying prophecies that the king of Babylon would charge them with treason and condemn them to death by burning.*

Might we listen to God's words, believe them, and be delivered by His gracious Saviour from such an end.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Will it go well for all Judah? Why or why not?
2. What will happen to Ahab and Zedekiah?
3. How can we escape such a judgment?

4.     

Praise Pray

Psalm 93a

1. Confess, with your family, that though You deserve the fires of hell, you are listening to God and trusting Jesus
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Jeremiah 29:8-10 Don't listen to them

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Not everyone was sending the same message as Jeremiah. Haniah had been telling them – 2 years of exile, then God will break the yoke of Babylon. (Chap 28. See also 14:14; 23:21; 27:14-15) But God said that He had not sent them and His people were not to listen to them.

So, today, we must be discerning. Not everyone who says, "God says..." is telling the truth. And we should be careful ourselves about saying, "God told me..." except where God has in fact said such a thing in His word – and said it in such a way that it applies to all God's people in all or in particular circumstances.

Test the spirits, John writes (1 Jn 4:1) to determine if they are from God. Study the Bible to see if what is being said is true.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What were other prophets saying about the exile?
2. How do we know if someone is really speaking for God?

3.     

Praise Pray

Psalm 93a

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to study God's word so you can better discern true teaching from false
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Jeremiah 29:10-11 I know the plans...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Sometimes we take truths from God’s word, rip them from their context, and believe false things. Jeremiah 29:11 is one of those verses.

First, what does it say? God knows what His thoughts/plans for us are. God’s plans/thoughts for us are for good, not for evil. God’s plans give us hope and a future.

Who is this promise for? Immediately it is for those faithful people of God who have been carried to captivity to Babylon. Not every Israelite would find God’s plan for them was good. God’s plans, though always just, for some are for harm. Hell is real, and God will send to a deserved hell all who reject His Saviour.

So, is the promise for us? Yes, if we are Christians. The Bible makes clear all the way through that God will work all things for good for those who love Him (Rom 8:28).

But what does this promise not say. It doesn’t say everything will be just as we hoped. It doesn’t say that because God’s plans are for good for us that everything will seem good or even be good. This captivity would last 70 years! Just because God promises hope for the future doesn’t mean tomorrow will turn out just as we had hoped. And, just because tomorrow turns out to be far worse than we had hoped doesn’t mean that God’s plans have failed.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who is this promise for?
2. What does it mean for us?
3. What doesn’t it mean?

4.     

Praise Pray

Psalms 93a

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to trust God’s plans for you, 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 Jeremiah 29:12-14 I will be found by you

Notes
(See back page for authors)

So, when our plans for our future go badly what do we do? What did God tell these exiles in Babylon to do?

Call to God. Pray to God. And, God promises that He will listen. God always promises to listen to the faithful, humble pray-ers of His repentant people. If it seems God is not listening there are some things we can ask ourselves.

Am I really asking? Am I really praying? Or just having a few, brief, God-ward thoughts now and then. God says we often don’t have His answers because we’re not really asking (James 4:2) Am I asking repentantly? Or am I holding on to sin in one area while asking for God’s help in a different area? (see Ps 66:18, 1 Pet 3:7)

Then God says to seek Him – with all our heart. Are we seek-ing God? Are we seeking Him with all our heart? Ken Smith says that too often people seek God like they seek a policeman im-mediately after running a red light.

But notice a great thing about God telling His people about calling to Him, praying to Him, and seeking Him. These are not commands. They are promises. You will call to me. You will pray. You will seek me. We are not to respond to such promises with fatalistic idleness. It is not, I don’t need to call to God, I don’t need to pray, I don’t need to seek Him – I can just let it happen. No! Instead, we verify that God’s promise is actually to us by calling, praying, seeking.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What do we do when plans seem to be going badly?
2. What can we do when it seems God is not listening?
3. How do we know if God’s promises here are for us?

4.     

Praise Pray

Psalms 93a

1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God has caused you to seek Him
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member