

5-11 Jan 2014

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/WTrpcf](http://bit.ly/WTrpcf)

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 drawn in part from commentaries on 2 Chronicles by Andrew Stewart and James Smith, 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** 2 Chronicles 15:1-2 If you seek Him...

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
2 Chronicles traces again most of the same time frame of 1-2 Kings. The kingdom has now been divided and the chronicler focuses on the southern tribes (Judah) and their kings. Much of Kings and Chronicles is discouraging to see God’s people (at least in name) living such sinful lives. Not just their sin – but painful reminders of how often we sin in similar ways. However, a few kings of Judah provide bright spots of God’s people seeking Him. Asa was such a king and this is such a chapter.

In chapter 14 Asa had a great victory over the Cushite invaders. More accurately, the Lord routed the Cushites (14:12). Stewart notes that *Asa was greeted on his return from the battlefield by the prophet Azariah, bearing a message of encouragement from the Lord...This was a reminder that Asa’s victory was from the Lord. God had heard his prayers and had answered them on the battlefield. This was also a reminder of the nature of God’s covenant with his people. God’s promises to them are couched in terms that require an obedient response.*

Are you seeking the Lord? Are you finding Him? You will!

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Who had won the victory over the Cushites? Explain
  2. What happens when God’s people seek Him?
  3. How can you seek more after God?
  4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 102a<sup>2</sup>
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to seeking God, 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

<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** 2 Chronicles 15:16-19 Whole hearted devotion

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
King Asa continues his devotion to God and faithful leadership of Judah. Not even his own family was exempt. As Stewart notes, *Asa was determined to remove the influence of idolatry as best he could. We can gauge the strength of his resolve to reform the religious life of Judah from the fact that ‘King Asa also deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole’ (15:16). Canaanite Asherah poles were used in fertility rites and it was probably obscene as well as ‘repulsive’. This was sin within his own family, where it is always most embarrassing and painful to confront and deal with. Yet Asa did not flinch from this difficult task.*

Again, Asa’s continued reformation included positive actions as well as eliminating negative actions. He gave of his own and his father’s wealth to God’s work. His devotion to God was, in the words of the chronicler, wholehearted. He loved God with His whole heart. He served and worshipped God with His whole heart. No wonder good King Asa was an influence for good in Judah. May he be an influence for good for us and for our churches as well. May God’s gracious work in him be mirrored by God’s gracious work in us.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why was Asa’s grandmother (some translations read mother) not exempt from Asa’s reforms?
  2. How is Asa’s devotion to the Lord described?
  3. How did he show his wholehearted devotion to God?
  4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 102a
1. Pray that you and your family will ..., 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** 2 Chronicles 15:13-15 They sought Him...

**Notes** (See back page for authors) King Asa and the people were serious about this covenant promise to God. So serious that any who refused to make this covenant promise faced the death penalty. Perhaps that seems a bit over the top to us – a bit over zealous. We get no hint that God was in any way displeased. He had long forbidden worshipping any other god. And those who will not repent, be forgiven, and seek God in response will suffer far worse than physical death in a lost eternity in hell.

But most of the people, it seems, joyfully entered into this covenant with God. There was shouting and trumpets and rejoicing – no long faced Christians here who could barely stand being gathered with God and His people. No, by the Lord’s grace, and in response to His graciousness, these people delighted to seek after God. Stewart notes three elements of this covenant:

*Firstly, the people made themselves accountable to each other in their walk with the Lord. Then, secondly, the people of Israel gave a national testimony to the truth that Jehovah is the Lord God. Then, thirdly, the people’s commitment to serve the Lord was wholehearted.*

How are you in covenant with God within His church? Are you seeking Him together with God’s people? As Stewart asks, *How do you take it when someone in your church asks questions about your walk with God? Are you defensive or thankful?*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What happens to those who refuse to covenant with God?
  2. What was the character of the people’s seeking after God?
  3. Why do we need each other in our walk with the Lord?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 102a
1. Commit with your family to seek the Lord wholeheartedly
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** 2 Chronicles 15:3-7 Be strong, don’t be discouraged

**Notes** (See back page for authors) Now the prophet, Azariah, gives King Asa a short history of Israel’s record in seeking or abandoning the Lord. As Smith notes, *Azariah rehearsed what happened during the period of the Judges when the people forsook Yahweh. Those priestless, kingless and lawless days were full of internal strife and external oppression.*

And, during those times of Israel abandoning God, God abandoned them. Actually, God “troubled them with every possible distress” (v6). Is God unjust in troubling His people? Absolutely not. God’s trouble was (and is always) intended to drive His people back to him.

And so we see that even in those times, God’s people sought Him. And God’s promise to be with His seeking people was seen in action time and time again. Stewart comments that *the lesson of the book of Judges is that when Israel turned to the Lord and cried to him in their distress, the Lord heard their cries for help. The lesson for Asa (and every subsequent generation of God’s people who find themselves in difficult circumstances) is found in v7. No matter how far God’s people have sunk in their distress, they are never beyond God’s reach...This must have brought great encouragement to the Chronicler’s generation when the people of Judah struggled to maintain their zeal for God’s house.*

This should bring great encouragement to us, as well.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What happened when Israel forsook the Lord?
  2. What happened when they sought the Lord?
  3. What is God’s encouragement in light of this history?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 102a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to find strength and encouragement in the Lord, 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** 2 Chronicles 15:8-9 God was with him

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

God told King Asa, through the prophet, “be strong, don’t be discouraged.” Asa believed God and obeyed Him. He took God at His word and took courage (v8). In his courage he sought to remove false worship and promote true worship.

First he removed idols from the land. Notice the strength of the language describing these idols – detestable or abominable. I don’t think that we should imagine that these idols were in themselves particularly worse than some others. Rather we need to understand that idolatry is detestable/abominable. We must be on guard against idolatry. John Calvin notes that our hearts are factories of idols and, if unguarded, even God’s people are tempted. So, Paul warns us to not be idolaters (1 Cor 10:7) like some of the Israelites were – and in fact to flee idolatry (1 Cor 10:14). John warns his readers to guard themselves against idols (1 Jn 5:21). Idolatry can be worshipping false gods, or even worshipping the True God in a way He has not commanded.

One of the best way to keep from idolatry is to fill our hearts and lives with true worship of the True God. King Asa knew that and so worked to restore the Lord’s temple and the Lord’s true worship. Steward comments that *Asa ...sought to turn the people’s hearts to the Lord*. How is your heart with God? How is that shown in your worship?

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

1. What must we do beyond simply hearing God’s word?
2. What is idolatry and why must we avoid it?
3. How can we turn our hearts more to worship the Lord?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

Psalm 102a

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to turn from idolatry to true worship of the True God, 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** 2 Chronicles 15:10-12 A covenant to seek God

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

It appears in Kings and Chronicles that every good king of Judah who followed a bad king of Judah led the people of God in a national ceremony of covenanting to God. God clearly reveals himself as a covenant God – One who makes promises and keeps them. And One who demands promises – and both demands and enables the keeping of promises by His people. The essence of God’s covenant language in the Bible is “I will be your God. You will be my people.”

And so, Asa, along with all Judah, as well as many Israelites who saw that God was with Asa renewed their covenant relationship with God. They promised to be God’s people – to seek Him with all their mind and with all their heart.

However, they did not make this promise on their own. First they sacrificed thousands of animals from the plunder of the victory in battle from the previous chapter. Steward notes that *when they brought these sacrificial offerings to God the people acknowledged that they were sinners before an angry and offended God. ‘Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness’ (Heb. 9:22), and without forgiveness sinners cannot come into the presence of a holy God, let alone expect blessing from him.*

Having been forgiven, they sought the Lord who had forgiven them. How well does that reflect our forgiveness and our response of seeking God?

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

1. What is the essence of God’s covenant with His people?
2. Why did Asa lead the people in making a covenant with God?
3. What was their covenant promise? How could they keep it?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

Psalm 102a

1. Commit with your family in prayer that, having been forgiven, you will keep covenant with God
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member