

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, you are encouraged, 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. frankston.rpca.org.au

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. tiny.cc/WkBbl or tiny.cc/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 drawn in part from commentaries on Matthew by John Calvin and William Hendriksen

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 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 Matthew 18:1-14 Precious little ones

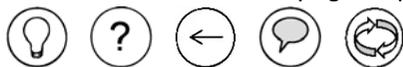
Notes Jesus cares about little children and His care reflects His Father's care. Jesus uses them as an example of faith. Humbly trusting God as a little child trusts their father is the only way to heaven.

He also uses these little children as an example of tender, young members of His kingdom. These young members of His kingdom are to be protected. Responsibility for protecting them falls to the other members of Jesus' kingdom.

One way we are to protect young members is to live self-disciplined lives so we don't give them an example of sinning to follow. Jesus is serious about this! He tells His followers to cut off their hand or foot or pluck out their eye rather than sin. While He is not advocating literal dismemberment, He makes it clear that drastic action is necessary to overcome temptation. Such drastic action is only possible by His grace.

Finally, Jesus tells us to hold these little ones in such high regard that if they go astray we go after them. In this, we imitate our Saviour who tenderly came after us to save us.

- Questions**
1. Who does Jesus hold in high regard?
 2. In what ways are older members of His kingdom to care for younger members?
 3. How did Jesus care for straying sheep?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 7a²
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to live self-disciplined lives, 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*. The same selection is sung each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Matthew 18:21-35 God's response to unforgiving servants

Notes Jesus cares about forgiveness. As He ends this story he makes clear His demands on those who follow Him.

Rarely is what we do not seen by others. So it was with this forgiven but unforgiving servant. The other servants of the king were outraged with his behaviour. The king must know – and must address this injustice. So, they tell the king.

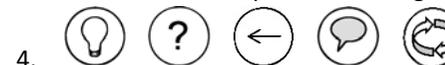
And the king is angry. Angry that his kindness is not reflected by the servant to his fellow servant. "I forgave you," he says. "Shouldn't you have then forgiven this one who owed you?" The obviously required answer is, "Yes."

But because the answer the servant had demonstrated was, "No," the king, in his just anger, withdrew his forgiveness. Not only that, he sent the servant to not just a debtors' prison – but a prison to be tortured until he repaid his debt to the king.

Then Jesus makes the application of the story clear. God the Father will treat those who do not forgive others in this same way. Well, maybe it's not altogether clear. Many questions remain. Is this servant a saved disciple of Jesus? Who are the torturers? How can this debt ever be paid?

But what is clear is this. If we claim to be saved people, forgiven by God for our unpayable debt, we dare not, in thankfulness for our forgiveness, refuse to forgive others.

- Questions**
1. Who usually sees what we do? Who always does?
 2. What was the king's response to the unforgiving servant?
 3. What is God's response to unforgiving people?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 7a
1. Pray that you and your family will be forgiving as you have been forgiven
 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 Matthew 18:23-30 The unforgiving servant

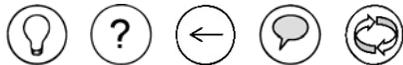
Notes Jesus tells about a king forgiving his servant an unpayable debt. Our expectation – or at least our hope – would be that the forgiven servant would be so overwhelmed with thanks toward the king that he would live a life of compassion and kindness.

Alas, it was not to be. For Jesus tells us more about this servant. One of his fellow servants owed him money. It was not a trifling amount – about 1/3 of a year’s wages. It would be difficult not to simply earn 1/3 of a year’s wages – but to save that up after costs of living. But, even though it was not an insignificant amount by itself, it was when compared to the amount the servant had owed the king – something like 1/600,000 of the original debt!

And what sort of compassion and kindness did this forgiven servant show to his fellow servant? Not a bit! Instead he grabbed him by the throat and demanded he pay. This servant pled with him, using the exact same words of the first servant to the king, “Be patient with me. I’ll pay it all.” But rather than patience, this one cruelly had his fellow servant thrown into a debtors prison.

What will the king do now?

- Questions**
1. How do we think the forgiven servant should react?
 2. How does he react to his fellow servant who owes him a much smaller amount?
 3. What do you think the king will do?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 7a
1. Confess, with your family, the times you are unforgiving to those who do less wrong to you than you do to God
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Matthew 18:15-20 Go and win your brother

Notes Jesus cares about unity in His church. He knows his followers are not perfect. They will at times have conflict because of their sin. So He gives instructions for dealing with conflict.

Jesus makes clear we are responsible to make serious effort to resolve conflict. And we are to keep those efforts with as small a group of people as possible. First, we are to go to a sinning brother – just us and them – seeking to win them back.

Only if that fails are we to involve others. And even that is not to be done quickly. We keep trying until they will no longer listen to us.

If they won’t listen to us, we take a witness or two. The hope is that this small group can bring the one sinning to repentance. Again, only if that fails and they will no longer listen, do we involve others – taking the matter to the church. Although Jesus doesn’t specify it here, it seems from the whole Bible teaching, that the elders would deal with the matter first, then only involve the whole church if efforts still fail.

Sadly, if one will not even listen to the church he must be treated as an unbeliever and put out of the church. Thankfully, in this heavy, important, matter, Jesus promises His presence.

- Questions**
1. Who should we tell if someone does something wrong to us
 2. What is the goal when dealing with conflict?
 3. When should we involve others? And who should we involve?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 7a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to follow Jesus’ method of resolving conflict, 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 Matthew 18:21-22 Forgiving again and again and again...

Notes Peter understands Jesus is giving serious instruction. It seems doable, perhaps, but difficult. "How often," he asks Jesus, "do we have to forgive others' sins against us?" Likely thinking he was being generous, he suggested even doing it seven times.

Imagine someone did something wrong to you – and did it again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again. Forgiving them once might not be too hard, but then again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again? I think we'd be with Peter – forgiving seven times seems really generous!

Much to our surprise, though, Jesus says we can't be satisfied with forgiving seven times. "No," Jesus says. "Seven times multiplied by seven times multiplied by ten times!" Four-hundred and ninety times?! Really? Yes, really.

And, even more. Even if we could keep track so much, we easily understand that Jesus doesn't mean we can quit forgiving when someone sins against us 491 times. Jesus makes it clear that genuine heart-felt forgiveness has no limits.

How can we ever do that? And, why should we? Jesus is going to tell a story to answer both of those questions – but we'll have to keep reading.

- Questions**
1. How many times does Peter think we should forgive?
 2. How many times does Jesus say we should forgive?
 3. How many times do you freely forgive others?



4.

Praise Psalm 7a

Pray

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to forgive others, again and again and again..., 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 Matthew 18:23-27 The forgiving king

Notes Jesus would tell stories, often called parables, to illustrate (and sometimes to hide the meaning of) His teaching. He tells one now. A story about a king.

This king had servants – some of whom owed him a great deal of money. This one, in particular, owed him an unbelievably high amount – ten thousand talents. Some Bible translations tell us it was 10,000 bags of gold. To earn a talent would take a labourer something like 20 years – just to *earn* one. That's not allowing for living expenses along the way either. So, if this slave didn't spend anything at all, he might be able to pay back the king in 200,000 years!

Obviously Jesus is making the point that this was an immensely unpayable debt. (Not unlike the debt that we owe God for our sin against him.) The king, justifiably, wanted his debt paid back. Since the servant couldn't possibly ever pay it back, the king said he would sell the man and his family to get a small portion back.

The servant pleaded for patience though. Even though it was far beyond impossible, he promised to repay patience by repaying the whole debt. The king responded with compassion. He didn't just say, "OK, you pay it back." He forgave the whole debt – wiping the slate clean. No more debt!

- Questions**
1. How much did the servant owe the King?
 2. How long would it take him to pay it back?
 3. What did the king do instead of making him pay it back?



4.

Praise Psalm 7a

Pray

1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God has forgiven you an unpayable debt.
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member