

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 drawn in part from commentaries on the Psalms by John Calvin and James Boice and D Martyn Lloyd-Jones

# 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

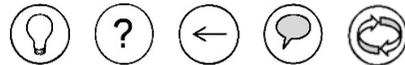
**Reading** Psalm 42:1-3 Thirsting for God

**Notes** Psalm 42 (and 43) is about a believer in God battling Spiritual Depression. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote a book on Spiritual Depression from this Psalm (and other passages) that was one of his most widely read books. Obviously the topic is relevant to us today.

In verses 1-3 one of the causes of depression for this believer is *forced absence from the temple of God, where God was worshipped*. (Boice) This “son of Korah” was in the *region beyond the Jordan to the north and east, where Mount Hermon (v.6) is*. (Boice) Perhaps the writer was being carried to exile in Babylon and was passing through the *last point from which he might glimpse the familiar mountains of his homeland to the south*. (Boice)

In this separation, he thirsted for God as a panting deer thirsts for water. But, so far, his thirst was not quenched. Tears were his food in this forced separation from his worship of God. Sometimes when people are feeling low, they stay home from worship. The Psalmist knew it would be much better to worship God with His people, even if weeping. *When you walk into church, if you're sad, don't put on a mask, cry if you must, you're with family, not on stage*. (Burk Parsons)

- Questions**
1. What is the cause of spiritual depression in these verses?
  2. How much did the Psalmist long for God and His worship?
  3. Where is the best place to be when we are low in spirit?



**Praise** Psalm 60a<sup>2</sup>

- Pray**
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to being in corporate worship every time you can, 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

<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** Psalm 42:11 Talking to my soul (again and again)

**Notes** Now, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of three times in Psalms 42-43, the Psalmist talks to his soul. *I suggest that the main trouble in this whole matter of spiritual depression in a sense is this, that we allow our self to talk to us instead of talking to our self... Have you realised that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take these thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking... Your self is talking to you.*

*Now this man's treatment was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself... His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: "Self, listen for a moment, I will speak to you." You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: ... "what business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, ... exhort yourself, and say to yourself: "Hope thou in God" – instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do.*

*Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: "I shall yet praise him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God." (Lloyd-Jones)*

- Questions**
1. What does our self say to us at times that depresses us?
  2. What must we do instead of just listening to ourselves?
  3. What do we need to say to our self when depressed?



**Praise** Psalm 60a

- Pray**
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to talk to your soul, especially when cast down, 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** Psalm 42:9-10 Forgotten by God...

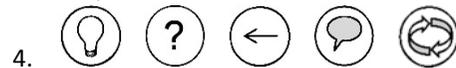
**Notes** This Psalm is not a “h-a-p-p-y all the time” song. The Psalmist is brutally honest with God about his condition. Sometimes we are cast down, low, depressed, yet we pretend. We pretend to each other, and we pretend to God. How silly we are!

No, the Psalmist tells God just how he feels. Forgotten by God. Abandoned to his enemies who taunt him all day long. “Where is your God?” they scornfully say. “You wouldn’t be in this difficult condition if He cared about you.” And, our great Enemy, the Devil, says that to us whenever we face trouble.

*In making such a complaint, the faithful are not to be understood as meaning that God has utterly rejected them: for if they did not believe that they were under his care and protection, it were in vain for them to call upon him. But they speak in this manner according to the sense of the flesh. This forgetfulness, then, relates both to outward appearance, and to the disquietude by which the faithful are troubled according to the flesh, although, in the meantime, they rest assured by faith that God regards them, and will not be deaf to their request.* (Calvin)

The whole of the Bible bears witness to the truth that keeping us out of trouble is not always what God does in caring for us. Rather He keeps us even in the midst of trouble. That is so important to remember when our troubles crush us to our very bones.

- Questions**
1. Why do we at times pretend to be happy when we are not?
  2. How does our Enemy taunt us in times of trouble?
  3. Do severe difficulties mean God is not caring for us? Why or why not?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 60a
1. Confess, with your family, that God always cares for you
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Psalm 42:4 Remembering better days

**Notes** The Psalmist continues his longing for those days when he was able to regularly worship with the people of God. We might think these memories would bring joy, but they instead weigh heavily on his soul. *Here [in this Psalm] we are able to watch noble souls struggling with their problems and with themselves... Sometimes they are elated, at other times depressed, but they are always honest with themselves.* (Lloyd-Jones)

Notice how important the corporate gathering for worship was for this believer. “I used to go with the multitude... I went with them...” It is too easy today with busy lives to view worship as an optional extra – useful, but optional. Forced – or voluntary – separation from worship will often lead to down cast souls. Let’s not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as some do. (Heb 10:24-25)

Notice too, the attitude when he went – with joy and praise, not just in his heart, but in his voice. Are we glad to hear them say, “Let’s go to the house of the Lord!”? (Psalm 122:1) Or do we view it as a duty and go grudgingly. Though the memories of going and going with great joy were depressing to this believer because of his forced separation from them, they also provide to us a great pattern of regular, joyful, corporate worship to follow.

- Questions**
1. How important was corporate worship for the Psalmist?
  2. With what attitude did he go to worship?
  3. How do you view going to church each week?
4. 

- Praise Pray** Psalm 60a
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to being in corporate worship with joy and praise every time you can, 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

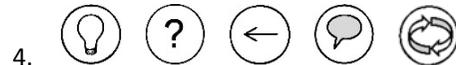
**Reading** Psalm 42:5 Talking to my soul

**Notes** Three times in Psalm 42-43 we have the refrain of v5. Though there is a slight difference in the Hebrew in v5 from v11 and 43:5 some English Bibles translate it the same each time. There is another difficulty with the translation. We might woodenly translate the last phrase of each of these verses, “the saviour of face” (“my face” in v11 and 43:5). Finally, is the “my God” that begins v6 in many of our English translations supposed to be the end of v5 so it matches v11 and 43:5? (Remember that the verse numbers are added for editorial clarity, but are not God-breathed.)

Having mentioned the difficulties, I will not attempt to resolve them here. But my comments will follow the NKJV translation. Notice first of all how the Psalmist talks back to His soul. We’ll look more at this in v11, but realise he is not content to simply “listen to his soul” but talks back. *Why? Because he was depressed and had forgotten God, so that his faith and his belief in God and in God’s power, and in his relationship to God, were not what they ought to be.* (Lloyd-Jones)

In this state, not only his soul is cast down, but it shows in his face too. *Yes, says the Psalmist in effect, but when I really look at God (in verse 5 he declares that the sight of God’s countenance is always helpful), as I get better, my face gets better also. I lose that drawn, haggard, vexed, troubled, perplexed appearance.* (L-J)

- Questions**
1. Why does the Psalmist talk to His soul?
  2. What is the connection between his face and his soul?
  3. What is the connection between his face and God’s face?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 60a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to talk to your soul, especially when cast down, 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

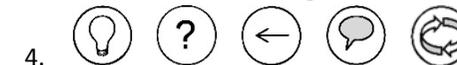
**Reading** Psalm 42:6-8 Hope deferred

**Notes** Though the Psalmist has memories of and hope for God’s care, he is not experiencing it at the moment. (At least he is not aware of it at the moment.) And, as God tells us, hope deferred makes the heart sick (Prov. 13:12). This heart sickness, or cast down, depressed soul, is what the Psalmist is facing – and what other believers face at various times. Like v4, here remembering is not enough – in fact it seems to make things worse, not better.

Rather than being lifted up, he is drowning under the waves – God’s waves. He *speaks of the overwhelming trials of his life, referring to them as “waves and breakers” that have swept over him. We do not know what these trials were, though we can imagine that they were the adverse circumstances that had borne him away from Jerusalem. Perhaps he is seated by a mountain stream, watching the tumbling cataracts and currents. Under other circumstances this might be a delightful experience, one likely to draw out thanks to God for creating such beauty. As it is, he sees the waves as cataracts of evil fortune that have broken on his head.* (Boice)

And even though he knows God will care for him day and night (v9) the longing indicates he hopes for this care but for the moment is unaware of it. When we feel this way, how valuable to remember that our Lord will never leave us nor forsake us. Whether we feel it or not, he is caring for us now.

- Questions**
1. What can hope deferred cause?
  2. Who has brought these waves and billows on the Psalmist?
  3. What do we know, regardless of how we feel, about God’s care?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 60a
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer God always cares for you
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member