

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. frankston.rpca.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 Acts by Simon Kistemaker, Kent Hughes, and John Stott

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 4:1-4 Persecuted for Jesus

Notes *The Acts 2 experience of the apostles' new life, rich teaching, satisfying koinonia, and joyful worship was expansive and expulsive—a rocket thrust that propelled them into a needy world. Acts 2 demanded Acts 3. Likewise, the healing power of Acts 3 led the early church toward another inevitable step in its growth. Having been infused with the power of the Spirit, moving out into the world with regenerative healing power, the church now experienced opposition—its first persecution (Acts 4). Persecution is an inevitable element of genuine Christian faith. (Hughes)*

We don't need to ask for it. We may not desire it. But persecution will come to God's people in a sinful world. Even though it comes, Jesus reminded us to take heart that He is in control, not the sinful world. His control is powerfully demonstrated as Luke narrates the power of the gospel. The growing church was not slowed down by persecution, instead it continued to grow. Five thousand men now numbered as believers in Jesus, plus women and children. Many who heard the word believed.

Who is hearing the word from us? Oh, that we would speak about the gospel and God would cause many to believe!

- Questions**
1. What was the response of the Jewish leaders to gospel words?
 2. What was the response of many of the Jewish people?
 3. What do we know about persecution of Christians?

4.     

Praise Psalm 58b²

- Pray**
1. Pray with your family for persecuted Christians
 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 Acts 5:1-11 Great fear

Notes As the church grew into a gospel community demonstrating God's greatness, Satan kept up his work. Persecution from the outside failed to slow the growth, although it will continue to be a tool of the devil used against the church – and will continue to be overruled by God for His church's good. So, Satan now turns to the inside. How can we corrupt the church from within?

What really seems fairly minor to us was obviously major to God. Seeing how Barnabas's encouraging generosity is recognised in the church, a couple within the church come up with a way to "have their cake and eat it too." They too sold some land. They too brought the proceeds to the apostles for distribution to those in need. One "teeny, tiny" difference – they kept some money back, but said they gave it all. Among other things this event disproves any claim of communism in the church. The property was theirs – they didn't have to sell it. Once they sold it, the proceeds were theirs to distribute as they wanted.

The problem was they lied to God, the Holy Spirit. And in response, God struck them dead – first Ananias, then his wife, Sapphira when she repeats his lie. *The divine intervention to stop deceit within the early church strikes fear in the hearts of every member of the church. All those who hear about the death of Ananias and Sapphira take note of God's judgment. (Kistemaker)*

- Questions**
1. Why did Ananias and Sapphira carry out this scheme?
 2. How might we do similar things in the church today?
 3. How do we know God cares about the purity of His church?

4.     

Praise Psalm 58b

- Pray**
1. Pray that you and your church will increase in purity
 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 4:32-37 A great church in action
The notes today are all from Kent Hughes' commentary

Notes

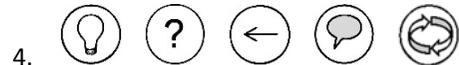
Christ is the only way, and he set the supreme missionary example by giving his life for the world. This produced in his followers a mind-set of outreach, sacrificial service, and growth. What was that first church like when it burst forth with news of God's love for a needy world? What is it that makes a church truly great?

Luke tells us that "All the believers were one in heart." They had a unity of heart... When the church is great, there is great unity. "Much grace" here is literally "mega-grace." ... The hearts of the Christians in the early church were full of God's grace, and it overflowed to those around them! When the church is great, there is abounding grace. A great church also has "great power"—literally, "mega-power." With explosive power they "continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus"

A generous, giving spirit permeated this great church. The overall atmosphere was one of care for one another. Communism says practically, "What is yours is everyone's." Christianity says, "What is mine is yours." When Christians sincerely care for one another's material needs, they want to minister to spiritual needs as well—bearing one another's burdens, sympathizing with and praying for one another. In touch with others' hurts, they gladly sacrifice time and comfort for those who are in need. (Hughes)

Questions

1. What was great about this new gospel community (church)?
2. How much should the church today look like the church then?
3. How can we hope to have such a great church today?



Praise Pray

- Psalm 58b
1. Ask God, with your family, to make your church similarly great
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading

Acts 4:5-12 By what name?

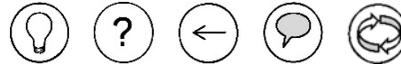
Notes

On the next day, Peter and John (maybe the healed begger v10, and maybe other disciples) are hauled into court after a night in jail. Only a few weeks earlier, the Sanhedrin had met in the house of Annas for the trial of Jesus, where Caiaphas functioned as the presiding officer of the court. The leaders in the Sanhedrin had tried to rid themselves of Jesus Christ of Nazareth by crucifying him. But Jesus' name reappeared when his disciples used it to heal a cripple. (Kistemaker)

So, when the immediate question is, "By what name have you done this?" the immediate answer is "Jesus." *Whether they were preaching to the crowd in the temple or answering accusations in court, [the disciples'] preoccupation was not their own defence but the honour and glory of their Lord. (Stott)*

And it was not simply "Jesus," but "Jesus whom you crucified." *Though most of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees and did not want to hear of the Resurrection, Peter hurled it at them like a flaming spear: "whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead." Then came his stupendous claim in verse 12: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." It is Christ or nothing! Christ or judgment! Christ or Hell! What marvelous, gracious aggression! (Hughes)*

Questions

1. What did the Sanhedrin ask the disciples?
2. What did Peter answer?
3. How might we proclaim this same Jesus?
4. 

Praise Pray

- Psalm 58b
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to boldly proclaiming Jesus, 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 Acts 4:13-22 We cannot but speak

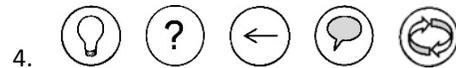
Notes Have you known someone who has just met or married the man or woman of their dreams? Often in those cases, you can't shut them up from talking about this person. In a similar, but far deeper way, the disciples could not quit talking about Jesus.

The Sanhedrin noted two things about Peter and John. They were incredibly bold and yet they were uneducated (not formally trained as preachers or rabbis). Marvelling, they realised how this could happen. *The uneducated Jesus, who had been skillful in expounding Scripture, had trained disciples to continue the work cut short because of his untimely death. The Sanhedrists had rid the earth of Jesus by crucifying him; now they faced Jesus' spokesmen, who possessed the same courage as their teacher.* (Kistemaker) Do people realise you have been with Jesus?

The Sanhedrin couldn't deny the apostles' boldness, nor could they deny the remarkable miracle of this healed man. But they thought they could put an end to this public preaching. So they made it illegal for them to speak or teach about Jesus. It seems more and more likely in America and Australia that it may become illegal even in our lifetime to speak or teach about Jesus. What will we do? What did the disciples do?

"We'll obey God," they said. We can't stop talking about Jesus." We can't and we won't. Might this be our response too.

- Questions**
1. What did the Sanhedrin notice about Peter and John?
 2. What did they command them?
 3. How did the disciples respond?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 58b
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to keep speaking about Jesus, 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 Acts 4:23-31 Holy Spirit filled boldness

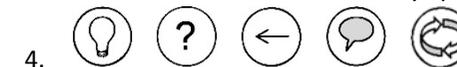
Notes When Peter and John were released, they went to the other disciples and told them what had happened. Then together, they immediately went to prayer. Having been bold, they prayed for boldness. I suppose we might have been tempted to gloat a little – "We sure told them, huh?!" But instead they asked God for more.

Their first word [in prayer] was Despotēs, Sovereign Lord, a term used of a slave owner and of a ruler of unchallengeable power. The Sanhedrin might utter warnings, threats and prohibitions, and try to silence the church, but their authority was subject to a higher authority still, and the edicts of men cannot overturn the decrees of God. (Stott)

In prayer, they recognise from their worship and praise song book (Psalm 2) that God had long ago told that the nations would rage against Him and His Christ. And, that God orders even the actions of sinful men to do His will. *He did not force Jesus' adversaries to engage in acts of violence against their will, for the evidence shows that they took full responsibility. Instead, God allowed them to conspire against him that he might accomplish salvation for his people.* (Kistemaker)

So they ask this powerful God to give them more of the boldness they had already experienced. And, we're told, God answered their prayer. The Holy Spirit filled them, and in response they all spoke the word of God with boldness.

- Questions**
1. What did Peter and John do on their release from jail?
 2. Why did the disciples ask God to give them boldness?
 3. What was the evidence the Holy Spirit filled them?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 58b
1. Ask with your family for Holy Spirit filled bold gospel speaking
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member