

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 1 Samuel by Gordon Keddie, John Woodhouse, and Dale Ralph Davis and the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)

# 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

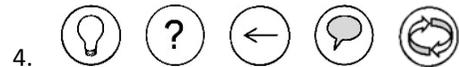
**Reading** 1 Samuel 11:14-12:2 Here is the King

**Notes** (See back page for authors) Israel had asked for a king (8:5-6). They wanted to be like the other nations. *Their help, they assume, is not in the proven arm of Yahweh but in a new form of government. "A King—or Bust," not "In God We Trust."* (Davis) In asking they rejected Samuel and God (8:7). Yet God gave them Saul (9:17), the King they asked for (in Hebrew the word for "Saul" and for "ask" are identical).

Now, after Saul led Israel in his first victory as King (chap. 11), Samuel calls the people to "renew the kingdom." Some had initially rejected Saul as king (10:27, 11:12) so this renewal would point to the certainty that Saul was Israel's king. Yet, as we will see in this chapter, it also renewed with clarity that God is Israel's King. *"The kingdom" was both Saul's kingdom and God's kingdom... Samuel's call to "renew the kingdom" therefore anticipates Jesus' instruction to his disciples to pray "Your kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10) and his call to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).* (Woodhouse)

Let us pray for kings (1 Tim 2.1-2), submit to them as God's servants (Rom 13), and yet declare there is another King – Jesus. (Acts 17:7)

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why did the people want a king?
  2. Who did God give them?
  3. What kingdom did Samuel call on the people to renew?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 63a<sup>2</sup>
1. Pray for kings and all who are in authority
  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** 1 Samuel 12:19-25 Fear the Lord, Serve Him (part 2)

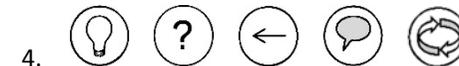
**Notes** (See back page for authors) Having seen and heard God's power and been reminded of His control, the people repent and ask for mercy. Notice that Samuel doesn't say, "Oh, it's OK. You haven't really done anything so bad." No, he reminds them that they have indeed sinned against the Holy God. They have done wickedly. Yet with the Lord there is forgiveness so that we might fear Him (Psalm 130:4) God will bring His people back. Though we might sin wickedly, those who are His will be kept from ultimately turning away.

*They may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.* (WCF 10:5)

Samuel's call to Israel, God's call to His people whenever they sin, is return, repent. Serve the Lord with all your heart. Again, the alternative is disaster (v25). *If there is reason to tremble, we ought to tremble. Neither the church nor individual Christians should be above truthful terror. If God grants us a sight of our own sin and of his displeasure, we can be sure he does not do so merely to see us tremble but to see us tremble and be restored. In 1 Samuel 12 we see both the kindness and the severity of God (Rom. 11:22).* (Davis)

Meanwhile, Samuel, as all leaders of God's people must do, will teach them what is right and pray for them.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. How serious is sin by God's people?
  2. What is the role of the leaders of God's people?
  3. Why and how should we fear the Lord?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 63a
1. Pray that you and your family will fear the Lord and serve Him, 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** 1 Samuel 12:16-19 The Lord is witness (part 2)

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

Having given the people their choice – serve God, along with their King – lest disaster come on them, Samuel now calls on God to witness to His power and control. God would demonstrate His power by sending thunder and rain on the people. He did, and the people repented and asked for mercy.

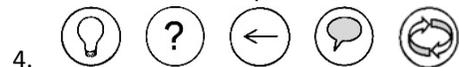
Granted, even in normal times, thunderstorms can be frightening, but *Israel knew this was no mere thunder and rain. Samuel had said it was wheat harvest (v. 17), that is, May–June, the beginning of the dry season. Every Israelite knew rain was extremely rare at this time, something like six inches of snow in Miami on Memorial Day. Not impossible, but so unheard of that it tends to make one think. Hence Yahweh got Israel’s attention.*

*If the storm was a sign, what did it signify? It showed Israel “what agencies of destruction God held in his hand, and how easily He could bring these to bear on them and on their property.” It showed that covenant curses were not mere official words tucked away in a canonical document (cf. Lev. 26:14–46; Deut. 28:15–68) but lively threats of a living God who had the power to impose them at any—even a most unlikely—time. (Davis)*

Do we believe the witness of God in His word and His world? Have we repented and asked for His mercy in Jesus Christ? Are we living as though we believe all who don’t repent and believe will receive the thunderous eternal judgment of the Holy God?

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

1. How did Samuel call on God to witness to His people?
2. What was the significance of this thunderstorm?
3. How did Israel respond?



**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 63a
1. Confess, with your family the terror of God’s justice
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** 1 Samuel 12:2-5 The Lord is witness

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

After presenting again King Saul to the people, Samuel reviews his own leadership among Israel. We know that old Eli’s sons had led Israel wickedly (chap. 2-4) And, although Samuel’s sons were more like Eli’s sons (8:3), Samuel himself had served since his childhood with integrity. *In the light of [his] long life of service he wanted the people now to answer some serious questions. “Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed” (v. 3a). The language suggests a court setting. Samuel put himself in the dock, so to speak, and invited the people to bring accusations against him before the Judge (the Lord) and a key witness (the new king). (Woodhouse)*

And the people agree that Samuel had not oppressed them nor taken from them. The king they asked for would take, take (8:10ff) from them. Although we often experience human power as “lording it over us” and chafe and rebel against such authority, Samuel had not governed in that way. *Another would one day say, “I am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:27). Samuel had been like that. (Woodhouse)*

The Lord, and the Lord’s anointed king, served as Samuel’s witness to the integrity of his leadership. And the people agreed. How would we do with God and the people around us as witnesses to the integrity of our lives?

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

1. How had Samuel governed Israel?
2. How does human authority often rule?
- 3.

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 63a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to a life of integrity, 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** 1 Samuel 12:6-13 Here is the king (part 2)

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

Having reviewed his own faithfulness in leading Israel, Samuel now turns to the far greater faithfulness of God leading Israel. Remember, in asking for a king, Israel had rejected both Samuel as their leader and God as their King (8:5-7) *Not only has Samuel been faithful (vv. 2–5) but so has Yahweh. Hence Samuel rehearses Yahweh’s “righteous acts” in Israel’s history (vv. 7ff.). Samuel points out a pattern throughout Israel’s history: crisis, cry for help, deliverance through leadership raised up by Yahweh.* (Davis)

As we saw throughout the book of Judges, and in many other places in the Bible (and our experience) even though often the people are in strife because of their own sin (v9-10), God responds with mercy and deliverance. (cf Rom 5:20)

Yet, even having experienced God’s deliverance time and time again, in their latest crisis (chap 11), Israel does not ask God to deliver them, but asks for a human king. So, here he is. *The paradox (which has not yet been resolved) is forcefully expressed in Samuel’s words. The king who was standing before them was, on the one hand, the one they had chosen, the one for whom they had “asked” ... On the other hand, “Asked For” (Saul) was the one whom the Lord had set over them (cf. 1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1, 24). Samuel had now twice referred to him as “[the LORD’s] anointed” (1 Samuel 12:3, 5). What was Israel supposed now to do with this king, of whom both these things were true?* (Woodhouse)

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

1. How has God dealt with his people Israel? With you?
2. Was Saul the king they chose or the king God chose?
3.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 63a
1. Thank the Lord with your family for his faithful and gracious dealings with you
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** 1 Samuel 12:13-15 Fear the Lord, serve Him

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

Instead of seeking first God and His kingdom and righteousness, we often seek what we want. Sometimes God gives us what we ask for, but brings trouble with it. (Ps 106:15). We might expect that to be the only possible outcome for Israel since they rejected God as their King and asked for a king like the nations.

*But God is gracious. They had been delivered from the Ammonites through the instrumentality of King Saul. If they loved and served God – both people and king – then they would enjoy the blessing of the Lord. (Keddie) That is to say, the only future for this new arrangement—“you and the king”—was if both they and their king feared and served and obeyed the Lord. They and their king had another King. It was time to renew that kingdom.* (Woodhouse)

Will we serve the Lord and obey Him? Will we demonstrate by our obedience that we have truly trusted savingly in Him? That choice remains today. “If you love me,” Jesus says, “keep my commandments. (Jn 14:15) The alternative is the just wrath of the Almighty God.

For Israel, Samuel, says, *The alternative was disaster... If they now refused to return to the Lord but persisted with their rejection of him and went their own way with their king, then ...the Lord would no longer be their God and Savior.* (Woodhouse) Instead of holding them carefully in His hand, God’s hand will be against them.

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

1. Is getting what we ask God for always good? Why or why not?
2. What alternatives does Samuel give Israel and their king?
3. What is the relationship between obedience and salvation?
4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 63a
1. Commit yourselves in prayer to love, serve, and obey 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