

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 Ezekiel by John Calvin, Peter Jeffrey, Derek Thomas, Iain Duguid, 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** Ezekiel 47:1 Water flowing from the temple

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)  
In chapters 40-46 we are given, as Thomas notes, *a glimpse of a future temple and its workings, together with its setting in the new Canaan. It is...an impressionistic picture given in terms which Ezekiel's companions would appreciate. Everything serves one end: the worship of God in an orderly, reverent fashion. Restrictions are placed on access to the inner court, where God dwells, restrictions which underline the fact the God is holy. Sacrifices abound, emphasizing man's inherent sinfulness and consequent inability to approach God. God's great work, something which he had depicted as a resuscitation of an army of corpses (37:1-14), includes the formation of a church in which access to God will be by means of the sacrifice of his own Son (Heb. 9:26; 12:28-29).*

Now Ezekiel is brought back to the temple and sees water flowing from the temple. This is not a plumbing problem! In both the tabernacle and Solomon's temple there was a large basin for cleansing. The RSB notes that *in Ezekiel's temple vision, these earlier basins are replaced by a life-giving river. This river recalls the creation (Gen 2:10-14) and the consummation (Rev 22:1-2)*

There is a river— its streams delight the city of God, the holy dwelling place of the Most High. Psalm 46:4

- Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What are chapters 40-46 about?
  2. How is access to God permitted?
  3. What is the river from the temple for?
  4.     

- Praise**  
**Pray** Psalm 124<sup>2</sup>
1. Rejoice that you have been given access to God's temple
  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** Ezekiel 47:11-12 Bearing fruit every month

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)  
Now Ezekiel is told that the trees lining the river banks are trees for food. Each month these trees would bear fresh fruit because of the live-giving water flowing from God's temple to them.  
Yet first Ezekiel is told there will remain salt-marshes. Perhaps this is a reminder of the remnant of sin and sinners even when the life-giving waters of the Spirit are poured out. Healing will still be needed. And, the fruit and leaves from these trees will be for healing.

Oh that our lives as living-water receiving – and living-water flowing people might be for healing and for fruit! Oh that we might drink deeply from Christ so our leaves are green and our fruit abounding!

Duguid notes that *the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of believers, which was accomplished at Pentecost, turns each believer into a miniature temple. As such, he or she becomes not simply a separated sphere of holiness, a walled garden in the midst of a wasteland. Rather, the believer as a temple is to be a source of blessing to all around him or her, by transmitting to them the life-giving message of the gospel. By its transforming power, the gospel heals the spiritually dead, making them alive in Christ and fruitful in their service for God.*

- Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why are the swamps and marshes left?
  2. Why do these trees stay green and bear fruit each month?
  3. How is fruitfulness in Christian's lives to affect others?
  4.     

- Praise**  
**Pray** Psalm 124
1. Pray that you and your family will bear fruit, 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** Ezekiel 47:9-10 A huge number of fish

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

The life-giving property of this river continues to be impressed upon Ezekiel. "There will be life everywhere the river goes." v9b This life will be seen in a huge number of fish – many different kinds. Fishermen will line the banks catching them and spreading their nets out to dry.

Duguid notes that *just as the water is transformed in Jesus' interpretation from a physical to a spiritual flow, so also is the activity of those who stand beside it. In place of literal fishermen surrounding the Dead Sea, Jesus calls his disciples to be "fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). The mark of Jesus' resurrection power in John's Gospel is, not coincidentally, a miraculous catch of a huge number of fish, which closes out the careers of the disciples as ordinary fishermen and inaugurates their ministry as those through whom eternal life will be brought to the nations.*

*We too are called to be "fishers of men" in God's service, yet what kind of fishermen are we? What kind of fishermen wait for the fish to come to them and give up at the first refusal? On the contrary, effective fishermen take on themselves the task of pursuing the fish where they are and refusing to take no for an answer, studying diligently how best to increase their catch. One way or another, insofar as it lies in their power, they will land that fish.*

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

1. How are the fish in this living water described?
2. How are the followers of Jesus to be fishermen?
3. How might we try to "fish for men"?

4.     

**Praise** Psalm 124

- Pray**
1. Commit in prayer to be fishers of men, 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** Ezekiel 47:1-2 The water was trickling from the south side

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

Duguid notes that *the river flowing from Ezekiel's temple follows the sacred route eastward from the inner court, out through the (closed!) east gate of the outer court (Ezek. 47:2). Because Ezekiel cannot follow it through there, he is brought round by the north gate and sees it trickling out of the south side of the gate. In comparison with the abundant streams of the traditional picture, the renewed temple provides at first a minimal flow.*

Soon there will be more, but even the trickle is significant. This minimal flow is not to be despised. (see Zech 4:10) Nothing that comes from God's presence is insignificant, even if it comes merely as a trickle. As Duguid further notes, *the temptation is for us to be impressed by large numbers and impressive presentation and to look down on the slow, steady work of the Spirit in building his church individual by individual. We...scorn the slow, steady accretion of Christians to the fold.*

*But the church of Jesus Christ, for all its impressive final form, ... often exists in the present as a trickle, not as a flood. God's work is often done in slow and steady ways that may never catch the headlines but nonetheless achieve his purposes. Our task, whether seeing the work of God progress like a mighty river or a dripping tap, is to seek to be faithful in centering our lives around Jesus Christ, our temple.*

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

1. How is this river pictured as it first leaves the temple?
2. What might be our reaction to God doing small things?
3. How might we see God's "trickling" work in our lives?

4.     

**Praise** Psalm 124

- Pray**
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to faithful service centred around 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

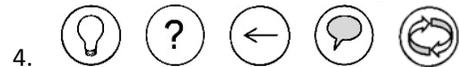
**Reading** Ezekiel 47:1-6 A river that could not be crossed

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
Although starting as merely a trickle of water, this water flowing from Ezekiel’s temple becomes a rushing stream, then a mighty river. The angelic guide points out the increase to Ezekiel at roughly 1/3 mile increments. From a trickle to ankle deep to knee deep, then waist deep, the river finally becomes too deep to walk across.

Thomas comments that *there is no way that any literal fulfillment of this river can even be imagined! The fact that at this point we are dealing with an impressionistic painting should be evident...* Duguid points out that this flow, from trickle to torrent is something that no upheaval in the topography of Palestine can accomplish literally.

Thomas further notes that *the key to understanding the river that flows from beneath the temple is found in John 7:37–39, where Jesus, on the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles, stands up and proclaims: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive ...’*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. How does Ezekiel note the river’s increased flow?
  2. How does this river point to Jesus?
  3. What are the streams of living water flowing from believers?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 124
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to drinking deeply from Christ, 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

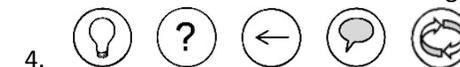
**Reading** Ezekiel 47:6-8 Living water

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
Ezekiel’s angelic guide now points out to Ezekiel the effects of this living water. Many trees lined its banks, soaking in its life giving properties. Even the foul, stagnant water of the Dead Sea is transformed by this living river and made fresh.

Duguid comments that *another aspect that Ezekiel’s river gives prominence to is the theme of transformation. The other rivers of life are eternal, fertility-inducing streams. They bring life to everything they touch, but there is no reflection on any prior state of the land that they impact. In contrast, Ezekiel’s river brings not merely life but life-from-the-dead. It not only provides fresh, living water, but “heals” the dead, salt-contaminated water of the Dead Sea.*

*...True freedom, the kind that comes from centering your life on the true and living God, is contagiously life-giving. Even the Dead Sea cannot hold out against its life-giving power. Life and fruitfulness are evident everywhere it flows. So also our lives as believers are to have an infectious attractiveness as people see something unique in us. What people taste as they come in contact with our lives should be honey, not gall...The thirsty world should find in the church the only drink that will slake their thirst. Regrettably, all too often we require sinners to get their act together before they are allowed anywhere near our fountains, for fear that they might contaminate them.*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why were the riverbanks filled with trees?
  2. What happened to the Dead Sea when the river filled it?
  3. How should believers’ lives be life-giving to others?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 124
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that you have life in Christ
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member