

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 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 Matthew by John Calvin, William Hendriksen, Kent Hughes, and Iain Campbell

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 Matthew 6:1-4 When you give...

Notes
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Are we doing what Jesus commands so that God is glorified (5:16) or so that we are seen by men? (v.1,5,16) Calvin tells us that *In this passage, Christ exhorts his people to devote themselves sincerely to good works; that is, to endeavour, with simplicity, to do what is right before God, and not to make a parade before men.*

Jesus begins with a serious warning. If we do good deeds (specifically giving, praying, and fasting) to be seen by men, then them seeing us is all the reward we will get. But, God our Father sees everything – even those things that are done, said, and thought in secret. So, if, in His grace, we follow Him even in secret, He promises that our Father will reward us openly.

Campbell says that *Christ's image is striking—let your right hand give away without even your left hand noticing! The problem is not just that we like being congratulated by others: we also enjoy being congratulated by ourselves. In Christ's kingdom, however, the greatest motive for our deeds of charity ought to be that God will have all the glory in what we do.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who might we want to see our charitable giving?
2. What reward will we get if we do good just for men to see?
3. What is to be our motive in doing good works?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 77a²
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to give to God's work in secret, 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*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Matthew 6:25-34 Seek first His Kingdom...

Notes
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In Matthew 6:19–24 Jesus warned us about the problem of materialism. In 6:25–34 he turns to its twin malady of worry. Jesus knew that a materialistic focus leads to anxiety regardless of whether one is rich or poor. Three times in this text the Lord tells us not to worry: (v. 25, 31, 34) Here our Lord powerfully and memorably gives us his counsel regarding anxiety. It was needed then, and it is even more needed today. Anxiety is the universal disease of our age. (Hughes)

To be devoted to Jesus Christ is to be freed from the anxiety and worry that so often characterize the fallen world in which we live. Jesus identifies three sources of anxiety: our bodies (we worry over the length of our lives and the state of our health), our food (we worry over what we will eat and drink, over diets and fats and carbohydrates) and our clothes (we worry about being in fashion or out of fashion). Jesus teaches us that 'the Gentiles'—those who have no covenant relationship to God—'seek after all these things' (v. 32).

But in the kingdom of heaven things are different. We have a Father who cares for us; if he gives such attention to the impersonal creation, will he not meet the needs of his own people? If we prioritize 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness' (v. 33), we shall lack nothing. (Campbell)

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does Jesus say we worry about?
2. Why shouldn't we worry about them (or any need)?
3. What does it look like to seek first God's Kingdom?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 77a
1. Confess with your family what you are anxious about
 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 6:19-24 Seek treasure in heaven...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

In this section, Jesus draws a contrast between earthly possessions and heavenly ones. All that we have here is liable to decay and may even be stolen from us. But if our hearts and our treasures are in heaven, we will have something solid and lasting that can never be removed from us. Jesus warns against a divided heart: it is impossible for both God and possessions to be our masters. The heart can be devoted to one master only. (Campbell)

Realizing that where our treasure is, there is our heart also, we would do well to ask ourselves: 1. What occupies our thoughts when we have nothing else to do? What occupies our daydreams? 2. Similarly, what is it that we fret about most? 3. Apart from our loved ones, what or whom do we most dread losing? 4. What are the things that we measure others by? Do we measure others by their clothing? By their education? By their homes? By their athletic prowess? Do we measure others by their success in the business world? 5. Lastly, what is it that we know we cannot be happy without? Those are the things we treasure, and that is where our hearts really are. (Hughes)

Instead, Hendriksen says we should treasure 1. *our standing with God as being fully pardoned (Mt 6:14)*, 2. *answered prayer (7:7)*, 3. *the enrolment of our names in heaven (Lk 10:20)*, 4. *the Father's love (Jn 16:27)*, 5. *a welcome not only to the "mansions" of heaven but to the Savior's own heart...* Where is your treasure? your heart?

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What sort of treasures on earth do we sometimes seek?
2. What sort of treasures in heaven should we seek instead?
3. Why and how should we seek those in heaven instead?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 77a
1. Acknowledge, with your family, your treasures in heaven
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Matthew 6:5-8 When you pray...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Jesus begins his teaching on prayer with the same warning as on giving. If you pray for public praise, that is all the reward you get. Hendriksen points out that *Scripture nowhere condemns public prayer, nor individual prayer offered in a public place*. Rather, Jesus was condemning the desire to be seen praying publically.

As well as praying for public praise, Jesus adds another warning about our prayers. They might be too long, too wordy. Are we piling on the words, making our prayers longer and longer because we think God will be impressed with our many words?

Hughes suggests *a few questions would help us. Do I pray frequently or more fervently when I am alone with God than when I am in public? Is my public praying an overflow of my private prayer? What do I think of when I am praying in public? Am I looking for "just the right" phrase? Am I thinking of the worshipers more than of God? Am I a spectator to my own performance? Is it possible that the reason more of my prayers are not answered is because I am more concerned about bringing my prayer to men than to God?*

Jesus adds an encouragement to our prayers as well. Our Father knows what we need. He wants us to ask because He knows our needs and cares for us.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What should we avoid in praying?
2. What should our prayer practice be like?
3. What questions might help us evaluate our prayers?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 77a
1. Commit yourself and your family to humble prayer, 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 6:9-15 In this manner pray...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Now, Jesus gives His disciples a model prayer. This prayer is commonly called The Lord’s Prayer. It might be better called The Disciples’ Prayer since it is given by Jesus to his disciples as both a prayer and a pattern for prayer. Jesus tells us that this is how we should pray – to Our Father – Our Abba.

Hughes says *Abba meant something like Daddy—but with a more reverent touch than when we use it. The best rendering is “Dearest Father.” God was referred to only fourteen times in the Old Testament as Father, and ...never individually or personally. And now as his disciples ask him for instruction on how to pray, Jesus tells them to begin by calling God their Father, their Abba!*

Campbell points how *this model prayer is concerned in the first instance with the glory of God. Before we ask anything for ourselves, we look for the hallowing of God’s name, the extending of God’s kingdom and the doing of God’s will. These are the issues that weed out all that is self-centred in our prayer lives. It’s not just a matter of coming with our requests: it is coming with requests for things that will give glory to God, that will be in the interests of his gospel and that will produce more obedience to him in our own lives and in the lives of others.*

Pray, dear Christian. Pray to your Dearest Father in Heaven. Pray for His glory, and then bring Him your requests. Pray.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does it mean for us to call God, Our Father?
2. What are the 6 petitions of this model prayer?
3. How do we pray for the glory of God?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 77a
1. Commit yourself and your family to prayer which is for His glory, 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 6:16-18 When you fast...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Fasting is less clearly commanded in the Bible than giving and praying. It is less practiced by Christians today. But should it be? Jesus mentions fasting with the same language and the same warnings against public show as He did for giving and praying.

When fasting is done in the Bible, it is tied closely with prayer. It is done at a time of repentance and confession of sin, at a time of sorrow over sin or sickness or death or defeat. It is also done at a time of urgency in prayer, and of setting apart missionaries and elders for the church.

Here, as with giving and praying, Jesus is most concerned with how we fast. Some put on a show, making sure others knew how holy they were for their fast. Instead, Hendriksen says, *the point Jesus stresses is that when his followers think they ought to fast they should, by anointing their head and washing their face, make this voluntary observance of a religious exercise as inconspicuous as possible... All such practices should take place “in secret,” that is, away from the eyes of men. They should be sincere acts of devotion to God, to him alone.*

Campbell says that *in the Old Testament, God required charity, prayer and fasting, but he always insisted that these should be offerings of the heart. The Lord is bringing his disciples back to the true meaning of the Old Testament, as opposed to the meaning imposed on it by the religious teachers and leaders of his day.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why might Christians fast?
2. What are we/are we not supposed to do in fasting?
3. What is to be our focus in giving, praying, or fasting?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 77a
1. Rejoice with your family that God desires heart devotion
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member