

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 2 Kings by Matthew Henry, James E Smith, and Dale Ralph Davis

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 2 Kings 17:1-6 The end has come

Notes (See back page for authors)
Israel – the 10 northern tribes – has been at war – internally, with kings killed, replaced, then killed again and externally with Assyria. The king of Assyria now increases his hostilities against Israel and King Hoshea. Davis notes that *six times in these verses [the writer] refers to the ‘king of Assyria’. He fills the landscape and horizon. And because the king of Assyria so dominates the scene, Israel will cease to exist. Israel has lived in Assyria’s shadow for some time but now she will be caught in Assyria’s vise.*

King Hoshea was bad – but not as bad as the kings before him. He might think, and we might think, God shouldn’t punish Israel when one of their best (at least one of their least bad) kings was ruling. Yet M Henry reminds us that *not only the sins of that generation, but of the foregoing ages, and to reckon for the iniquities of their fathers, who had been long in filing the measure and treasuring up wrath against this day of wrath.*

And so, for King Hoshea (v4) and for Israel (v6) God’s promised judgement has come. Though He may tarry, His eternal judgement will come as well. Your hope to escape had better not be that you’re not as bad as some others.

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why isn’t being not as bad as others not good enough?
2. Why is Hoshea and Israel carried away by Assyria?
3. What is our only hope for the judgement to come?

4.     

Praise Psalm 81b²

- Pray**
1. Claim Christ’s righteousness as yours, by faith
 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 2 Kings 17:29-41 A little of your god, a little of mine...

Notes (See back page for authors)
Christians are sometimes called to participate in religious ceremonies with other religions. The Christian community is divided. Some feel true Christians can’t participate in religious ceremonies with teachers of false religions. Others claim it’s OK – after all, we’re all worshipping the same God, aren’t we?

The new settlers in Israel’s land had a priest returned from exile in order to teach them how to serve the Lord. And, the response was (v32a, 33a) that they feared the Lord. But. They feared the Lord but they also worshipped their own gods. Isn’t that OK?

No, it’s not OK. It wasn’t for them. It’s not for us. Davis points out that *verse 34 stands in formal contradiction to verse 33. In verse 33 the imported residents are ‘fearing Yahweh and serving their own gods’, while verse 34 denies this: ‘They are not fearing Yahweh’—nor, for that matter, are they living in line with the statutes, ordinances, instruction, and commandments Yahweh had directed Israel to keep.* Then Davis reminds us that *covenant religion is [an exclusive universe]. It carries a fundamental intolerance at its center: Yahweh or other gods. If Jesus is Lord, all competitors must be excluded.*

Will you have Jesus? Then have Him and no other.

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What did the new settlers do for their religion?
2. How might people today fear the Lord and serve their own gods?
3. Why is Christianity so exclusive?

4.     

Praise Psalm 81b

- Pray**
1. Pray that you and your family will serve Christ alone, 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 2 Kings 17:24-28 God's lions

Notes
(See back page for authors)

After Assyria carried Israel away captive, they did not want the land and the cities to waste away. So they repopulated it with other captured peoples. Smith notes that *by separating people from their native lands and from their leadership, the Assyrians hoped to be able to prevent rebellions from subject peoples.*

Yet these resettled people didn't know God nor His ways. It is unlikely that the remnant of Israel (2 Chr 34:9) would themselves have been walking in or talking about God's ways. So these people did not know nor fear the One and True God.

In response God sent lions among them to kill some of them. "But, that's not fair!" we might exclaim. How were they supposed to know God and fear God? Indeed, the objection continues today, "How can God punish those who have not heard of Him?" It is surprising at times to hear God's people proclaim an inherent innocence in people that should 'let them off the hook' of God's judgement. But there is no escape. God makes Himself known in His creation so that no one has an excuse (Rom 1:18-20)

The King of Assyria sent back a captured priest to teach them God's ways. And God sends preachers and teachers today to tell people of the Christ in whom they must believe. Rom 10:9-13. Perhaps God will use you this week to tell someone that "every-one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Who was settled in Israel's land?
2. Why did God send lions? Was that fair? Just? Why or why not?
3. How are people to hear of Christ?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 81b
1. Rejoice with your family if you have called on the Lord's name
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading 2 Kings 17:5-12 The Lord provoked to anger

Notes
(See back page for authors)

The writer here gives us more details of the reason for Assyria taking Israel captive. Why? God had rescued His people from bondage in Egypt, cast out the nations of Canaan, and given them the land. In response to God's mercy, Israel served other gods. Their idolatry was both secret and excessive. Davis says that *amazing grace should have been met with lasting gratitude.* But instead *amazing grace is met with massive apostasy.*

But what secrets are not laid bare before the God who knows all things? And how will God respond to those who instead of loving Him with their 'all', use their 'alls' and 'everys' (v9-11) to serve the gods of the nations? God's response is righteous judgement. Provoked to anger, He judges those who claim to be His people, but who only are His in name but not in heart. Henry reminds us that *it was the Lord that removed Israel out of his sight; whoever were the instruments, He was the author of this calamity. It was destruction from the Almighty.*

Is it any different for us? It is too easy to claim to be God's people without really being God's people. Are you responding to the gospel with lip service, while your 'alls' and 'everys' actually show allegiance to the gods of the nations? As has been asked, "If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" There wasn't for Israel.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What had God done for His people?
2. How had they responded?
3. Some think only the "OT angry God" judges? Respond

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 81b
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to making your call and election sure, 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 2 Kings 17:13-17 God's testimony. God's anger

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Again in this section we are reminded of God's testimony to His people and their rejection which is followed by His just anger. Again and again God sent His prophets to warn His people. "Repent and return," was His message. But, "reject and rebel" was the people's response. Davis suggests we *read through verses 15-17 at a deliberate pace. Feel the increasing weight each main clause adds to this mass of apostasy. Three verses and ten main clauses summarize 200-plus years of infidelity and crush the reader under its load.*

Notice how like what we worship we become. The people worshipped idols and became idolaters. The Hebrew words for both imply emptiness or nothingness. Smith puts it this way: *The people chose to follow "vanity," the empty, futile, impotent pagan gods. As a result they themselves became vain, i.e., impotent.*

But what is all this to us? The New Testament insists that we take warnings from Israel's turning away from God. See 1 Cor 10:6-12, Heb 2:1-3, 12:25. Davis says, *Hebrews assumes that Israel's apostasy is repeatable for professing Christians.* How can we avoid their sins? Two answers God gives in Hebrews – be together for daily encouragement (3:12-13) and don't miss worship (10:24-25).

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What was God's call and the people's response (4 Rs)?
2. What response to Israel's sin does the NT call us to?
3. What can we do to avoid turning from God?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 81b
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to being with the church for encouragement and worship, 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 2 Kings 17:18-23 Removed from God's sight

Notes
(See back page for authors)

So, because God was angry with His people, Israel, He removed them from His sight. Three times the writer remind us of this (v.18,21,23) No more would they live before the face of God.

Many people think this would be just fine. Let me do what I want to do, far from the sight of God. I'll leave God alone if He'll leave me alone. Some go so far as to say they would prefer hell to heaven because God is not there.

Yet to be removed from God's sight is a tragic thing, not in any way a good thing. It is to be removed from a position of favour and instead be in a place of judgement. Hell is not the absence of God, rather it is the absence of any good thing from God.

For Israel, no more would the Lord bless and protect them. No more would the Lord make His face shine on them and be gracious to them. No more would the Lord look with favour on them, nor give them peace.

Of God's people, now only Judah was left. The frozen chosen. Safe and secure. Or not. Judah also did not keep God's commands, but walked in the ways of Israel. Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. We're not like those bad people, right? Restore us, God. Restore me, God. Restore us, Yahweh, the God of Hosts; *look on us with favour*, and we will be saved. Psalm 80:19 (HCSB)

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does it mean to be removed from God's sight?
2. Why must we be restored again and again?
3. How can God look on us with favour?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 81b
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God looks on His people with favour as He sees us in Christ's perfection
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member