

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, James Boice, Gordon Fee/James Stuart, 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** Hosea 14:1 Return to Yahweh Your God

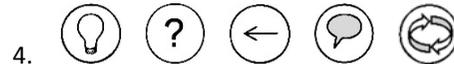
**Notes** (See back page for authors) Hosea has written of God’s severe judgment of Israel, as well as of God’s gracious love. Here he concludes with a call to repentance, that those who deserve God’s judgment may instead find His love. The RSB points out *this thematic exhortation to return (2:7; 3:5; 6:1; 7:10; 12:6)* found in the book.

Boice notes that *one thing is certain. Restoration will not be apart from a genuine repentance, involving both a frank confession of sin and a radical return to God. Sin brings death. It is only the grace of God received through faith that brings blessing.*

Smith comments that *Hosea cries out to his countrymen: “Return, O Israel, to Yahweh your God.” The Hebrew uses a preposition which means more than merely turning to Yahweh. It means complete conversion. The salvation of God must be preceded by genuine repentance.*

Sin is not merely a mistake. “Sin” or “iniquity” points to gross injustice – a serious violation of God’s ways. These Israelites have fallen in their sin and the call is to get up and repent.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What is Hosea’s call to Israel?
  2. What is sin?
  3. What has sin caused Israel to do?



- Praise** Psalm 135b<sup>2</sup>
- Pray**
1. Commit to repent and flee from sin, 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

<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

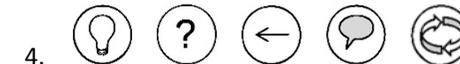
<sup>2</sup> Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

**Reading** Hosea 14:9 Understand these things

**Notes** (See back page for authors) Smith comments that *the Book of Hosea closes with a warning. The moral of the entire book is summed up in this concluding verse. Wise and understanding readers would easily discern it. Yet because some are willfully obtuse, Hosea states in plain language what the book has tried to enforce. First, “the ways of Yahweh are straight” in contrast to the crooked ways of evil. The ways of Yahweh are revealed in his word. Second, “the righteous walk” in those straight paths. They live by the clear precepts of God’s word. Third, “transgressors stumble in them to their own destruction.” Those who ignore God’s word would not see life more abundant or life eternal.*

Boice puts it this way, *Hosea ends with an appeal to those who have wisdom to discern the truthfulness of such teaching. It is the same [as verse 9 reads] today. Sin brings death, but obedience is the path to life. If you have never come to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, come to Him. Confess your sin and throw yourself on His abundant mercy displayed in His dying for you. If you are already His, be sure to live for Him.*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What will the wise person do with Hosea’s letter?
  2. What is the response of the righteous to God’s ways?
  3. What is the response of the rebellious?



- Praise** Psalm 135b
- Pray**
1. Commit in prayer to live for Jesus, 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** Hosea 14:8 Our fruit comes only from God

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
After this beautiful description of fruitfulness coming to God's people and to others because of God's blessing, He reminds the people that we can find such blessing in Him alone.

As Boice notes, *we must come the whole way. We want to come part way, which is, in our thinking, far enough to get what we want while nevertheless preserving the greatest measure of freedom to do our own thing. This will not do in dealing with God. It might work with our employer, parents, husband, or wife. But it does not work with God for the simple reason that He is God. He says to us, "I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give My glory to another or My praise to idols." (Isa 42:8). If we would have God, we must renounce our idols entirely.*

Calvin notes that God then uses two images – a fir or pine tree and a fruit tree. *The reason, then, why God promises to be like a fir-tree to his people is this, because all who will fly under his shadow shall be preserved from the heat. But the meaning of the second similitude [is] that God would supply his people with fruit... when God makes us fruitful, we are branches set in the best vine; and it is also true, that the whole fruit we have is from him; for all vigour would fail us, except God were to supply us with moisture, and even life itself.*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
- How are people tempted to mix God with idols?
  - How are you tempted to mix God with idols?
  - What does God promise will come from only Him?
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- Praise Pray** Psalm 135b
- Commit to turn from idols and seek blessing in God alone
  - Pray for a member of your church
  - Pray for your family
  - Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Hosea 14:1-3 Take words of repentance

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
A serious danger with sinners repenting is that the repentance may be insincere. While in our own relationships if a sinning brother even says "I repent" we must forgive him (Lu 17:4). But God can tell when repentance is merely empty words.

Yet the words are important – when brought from a truly repentant heart. So Hosea here gives a form of words that these repentant Israelites might bring. Notice the four elements. 1) Our sin needs to be forgiven and taken away by God. 2) After we have repented God will accept good that we do. 3) We owe God an eternal debt that 4) we can only repay with a life and lips of praise. We would not do wrong in making these words our prayer of repentance. Although repentance *and* salvation words can be empty, the HCSB notes correctly that *this final invitation to repent even gives a "sinner's prayer."*

And, not only is Israel turning to God, they are turning away from false gods. See 1 Thess 1:9. Israel turns away from trusting Assyria and they turn away from calling their hand made crafts their "gods". Instead they would trust God's compassion and mercy.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
- Are words required when we repent? Why or why not?
  - What must accompany words of repentance?
  - What are the elements of this "sinner's prayer"?
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- Praise Pray** Psalm 135b
- Commit to words and a heart of repentance, with God's help.
  - Pray for a member of your church
  - Pray for your family
  - Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Hosea 14:4-5 God freely loves

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
God responds to this repentance of His people with His own words. He responds with four elements as well. 1) He will heal their turning away. In other words, not only will God accept them turning back to Him, His work, as Physician of their souls, will help “fix” their turning away problem. 2) He will love them – freely. God is under no compulsion to love us. He loves us because He loves us. (See Deut 7:7-8). 3) He will take away His just anger from His people. Of course, we know that is possible because He poured out His wrath on Christ for the sins of His people. And 4) He will grant them refreshment like the morning dew.

The RSB notes that *Israel’s characteristic unfaithfulness (4:10–12; 5:4; 7:4; 11:7) will be healed by the great Healer, whose anger is now turned away. The promise of healing began to be realized when Israel returned from its sixth-century exile in Babylon. It finds much greater fulfillment in Jesus Christ and His church, and is consummated at His Second Coming. And, further, in this love song, we hear again the deep affection of God for His elect. This undeserved love is what the New Testament calls grace (Rom. 5:15; Eph. 2:5, 8).*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. How does God respond to His people’s repentance?
  2. Does God owe us such a response? Why or why not?
  3. Why is God’s anger at our sin justified?
  4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 135b
1. Rejoice in God’s undeserved favour and forgiveness
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Hosea 14:5-7 God’s blessing

**Notes** (See back page for authors)  
God grants forgiveness to His people and promises them refreshment. He describes this as dew. Note the results of this blessed refreshment.

Boice comments that this promised refreshment *is couched in a series of images that may well be the most beautiful and poetic section of the book...The judgment of which the earlier chapters speak is harsh and sudden. Ruin results. But from the ruins, like plants or trees gradually forcing down their roots and rising above the destruction, the people would again begin to grow under God’s divine presence and blessing...They will be like flowers, trees, vines, and fields of grain.* Boice then asks, *Does the scope of this promise of God surprise us? It should not, because God is the source of every good gift and all fruitfulness. Beauty! Strength! Value! Delight! Abundance! These are in Him. He is beauty, strength, value, delight, and abundance. He is the answer to our need.*

And God’s blessing to Israel is to flow outward to the nations (see Psalm 67) The HCSB notes *that God promised to restore life and beauty to Israel as to a dead, abandoned garden. Israel would again be a blessing to the nations as they were originally intended to be (Gen 12:1-3; Isa 2:2-4), signified by the fragrant olive tree furnishing not only food, fuel, and medicine but also shade (Lk 13:18-19)*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What is the result for God’s people of His divine blessing?
  2. What is the result for others of His blessing to His people?
  3. How has God refreshed you recently?
  4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 135b
1. Ask God to bless you so the nations will come to Him
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member