

# Family Bible Reading



– what a Privilege!

## The best book

THERE IS NO BOOK so well designed for promoting family fellowship and harmony as the Bible.

This should be at the centre of family life in daily relationships and routines. If it is not read daily in the family circle, how can it be the basis of family life? We should be introducing Bible stories and biblical teaching as part of a child's day from very early on – from babyhood.

It is well-recognised that eating meals together as a family promotes family unity and health. What well-being and blessing will come to a family who daily spend time together receiving the Bread of Life and then prayerfully put it into practice!

*"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily Bread."* (Matt. 6:10,11)

Today there is much material geared to the entertainment of children in books, electronic media, social networks, organised activities etc. God's Word should feature realistically in children's day-to-day lives but pressure to exclude or drown it out with other things (Mark 4:19) has never been greater. The notes that follow are not prescriptive but are an attempt to follow the Bible's guidelines.

Bible knowledge alone will never save anyone, child or adult. However, when we help our children to know the Scriptures it invites the Lord to give them new life. Slackness on our part does the opposite! Our heavenly Father desires our children to be saved far more than we do. Let us make request to him to save them and show we really mean it by the way we put his Word into practice in our family.

### **God's perfect equipment for family life**

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Tim. 3:16,17)

This includes the vital work of raising a family.

When we stand before the judgement seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), and give account of our parenthood, the place given to the Word of God in the education of our children will appear in its true significance. We must keep the eternal welfare of our children at the top of our agenda.

### **Essential knowledge**

The Lord is interested in the quantity and quality of our child's intake of his Word. If our children are to be educated for the real world and be ready for when the Lord returns, their knowledge of Scripture must be good. The following words from Psalm 78:1-8 speak for themselves:

*"O my people, hear my teaching;  
listen to the words of my mouth.*

*4 We will not hide them from **their children**;  
we will tell the **next generation***

*the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,  
his power, and the wonders he has done.*

*5 He decreed statutes for Jacob  
and established the law in Israel,  
which he commanded our forefathers  
to teach **their children**,*

*6 so the **next generation** would know them,  
even **the children** yet to be born,  
and they in turn would tell **their children**.*

*7 Then they would put their trust in God  
and would not forget his deeds  
but would keep his commands.*

*8 They would **not be like their forefathers--**  
a stubborn and rebellious generation,  
whose hearts were not loyal to God,  
whose spirits were not faithful to him.*

There is no collection of books to rival the Scriptures. Each work in this library is written and compiled by a Genius and designed as the perfect basis for truly sound living in the 21st century and beyond. The Bible is in its final edition, needing no upgrades. It contains all the knowledge necessary to guarantee a safe and useful journey to unimagined realms of glorious freedom, far beyond the confines of mortal minds. (2 Tim. 3:14-17 and Psalm 119)

### **Many stories and much teaching**

Even for children of primary age and under, there is much material.

*The Old Testament* has over 500 narrated events which are suitable as the basis of short stories. The majority of these can be used as instalments of serials.

In *the New Testament* we have:

- 34 or so miracles of Jesus, 41 or so parables of Jesus
- Nearly 100 other incidents in the life and ministry of Jesus
- About 70 stories of the early church, about 30 graphic events from Revelation

This makes a total of over 700 stories. There are also many direct teaching passages which parents can profitably explain to their children (e.g. in the Book of Proverbs and the New Testament).

### Prescribed reading

All 66 books are *prescribed reading* for every person who has been given the gift of literacy. Our Course Director chose these specifically as the best of all literature to study. In the gracious forthcoming Examination, he will be looking for those with a good record in *applied knowledge* of his great library (e.g. Luke 6:46-51). He has said, "*Heaven and earth will pass away: but my words will by no means pass away.*" (Mark 13:31)

Parents cannot just expect a child automatically to become acquainted with the Scriptures. We need to efficiently use the few short years of childhood and teens. Church worship and teaching will greatly aid this but the chief responsibility is ours.

### A parent's privilege

It is a father's and mother's wonderful privilege to aim for their child to be familiar with every story in Scripture. That is a considerable task, involving years of prayerful input from infancy to teens. Doing this we look in faith to the Lord to plant faith in our child. '*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*' (Romans 10:17)

## General knowledge is important

It will help our children understand our oral story telling and intelligently read the Bible for themselves, if they have an input of general knowledge that will equip them. From the day of birth, a child is taking in general knowledge. We can always be pointing out God's world and fostering the child's interest in his/her environment.

As children get older and able to read, there is much to enhance their ability to understand the Scriptures. This is common sense. For example, Exodus chapters 1-15 will be better appreciated as a child grasps various scientific, geographical and historical concepts. Children's general learning and reading should benefit their grasp of the written Word and **vice versa**. The Scriptures are the fundamental, *essential commentary* on the whole of life on this planet. Children who increasingly know and obey God's Word will, by God's grace, learn how to bring *true wisdom* to the study of literature, other media and *every subject under (and beyond) the sun*. See Psalm 119:99,100.

*A glory guilds the sacred page,  
Majestic, like the sun:  
It gives a light to every age;  
It gives but borrows none.*

William Cowper

## Teenage reading

By mid to late teens a child should be well established as a Bible reader. Many children from Christian families profess faith by this stage and, by God's mercy, have a genuine appetite for his word. Ideally, teenagers should be encouraged to read the whole of Scripture several times before they reach their twenties. In view of the Author's expectations this is entirely reasonable.

The older children are, the more responsible for their own reading they become. Our prayer will always be for the Lord to give new birth. Then they will have living hearts and real spiritual hunger like the Christians Peter wrote to: *"As new-born babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."* (1 Peter 2:2)

## Don't be discouraged

We can all be tempted to despair and think that there is no hope for our children, especially when we see how far short we have fallen when it comes to family Bible reading and prayer.

It is right for us to be sorry about our failures but NEVER GIVE UP! We have a heavenly Father who knows all about us and our sins. He, through his Son, says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me." He is willing and able to help us to start to improve our family organisation to give proper place to his Word. Let us go to him and sincerely ask him how to do this in our family with its unique situation.

If we ask our Father for his living Bread for our family, will he give us a stone?

Bible quotes from the NIV or NKJV

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are available from  
Steve and Carol Sherwood  
40 Leivers Close, East Leake,  
Loughborough, LE12 6PQ

Tel: 01509 854340 Email: [scsherwood@gmail.com](mailto:scsherwood@gmail.com)

