

Families Worshiping Together

There are many different ideas and philosophies regarding children and their involvement in the Sunday morning worship service. Conventional wisdom says that children learn best at a level that is directed to their specific age. We understand that and believe it carries some merit. However, we also believe that the Sunday morning worship service is supremely important and should be a time when the entire family should seek to worship God together.

We realize that what we are striving for is countercultural and although segregating our families does have its advantages, it has also produced some unintended consequences. Families are divided in almost all areas of life. They go off to school while we go to work. Activities such as sports or entertainment provide niches that constantly move us in different directions. As a result, family time has all but disappeared. That is why togetherness on Sunday mornings is so crucial.

Scripture places the responsibility of parents to lead their children by example. If worship is as important as God's Word says, then what better way to model its importance than to have our children sitting by our side on Sundays. Children should catch a vision of the importance of worship by watching mom and dad singing, praying, giving, and listening to God's Word. We believe the best way to form their young minds for worshipping God is for them to see their own parents seeking and worshipping the God they love.

This philosophy of families worshipping together is not a new idea. It might surprise you to know that it actually comes from Scripture. Nehemiah 8:1–3 tells us that all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel. 2 Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, and those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

There are two observations in the passage that we believe are important.

1. The entire family was involved in corporate worship.

We're told that men and women were there and that "all who could listen with understanding" were also present. This certainly included children.

2. It gives parents a guideline to determine when to begin transitioning toward family worship.

It doesn't give us a specific age, but it does tell us that they should be in with the family when they are old enough to understand.

Our experience has revealed that we greatly underestimate the ability of our children to learn in our corporate worship services. Even if the content goes over their head, we have seen time and time again that children have a remarkable way of hearing and remembering basic truths.

We hope you will prayerfully consider this worthy task of worshipping God together with your family. It is our desire that children's church be considered a temporary step in the pursuit of the bigger goal. We are fully aware of the time and effort it may require as you strive to make this transition. To help you in this pursuit, we have reserved room 109 in the Northwest corner of our building for this purpose. In this room you will find a large-screen TV that is live streaming the service. Please use this room for that transition time when your children might not yet be accustomed to sitting quietly for the entire service. In here you will not need to feel self-conscious as you train them in the discipline of sitting and listening.

If you have any questions or need additional help making this transition, we have several families that would be eager to give you some great ideas on making it happen. We want to help you pursue excellence in worship as a family. May God bless your efforts of seeking God's supremacy in worship.