

An Introduction to Family Altar or Family Devotions

“A “Family Altar” is an established, regular, set-apart time when the family gathers together for worship in the home. The family worship period *in its simplest form*, includes Bible reading and prayer. *As it grows*, it may also include singing, the memorization of Scripture, and a systematic study of the Bible. All that is done should be done on a level that will involve and benefit the whole family.”

“Family Altar” is an affirmation that God is at the center of the home. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THIS HOME. “Family Altar” is the time to stop and to remind the family that the home is God’s place and He is in charge of it. It is to be a place of blessing, obedient and God-conscious, a recognizing and reverencing God’s presence here and now. It is also a time to offer your petitions (concerning the home, school, work, health, etc.). We are looking to Him to protect the front door, the back door and the windows, all that is within and without.”

Family Devotion times of worship may begin on a weekly basis and may grow into a daily occurrence. The fear of the LORD begins at home (see Deuteronomy 6) and a family that prays together, stays together.

1. Set aside time once a week as a family where everyone (except perhaps married/independent adult children) can make a decision to come together for a time of family worship. If you have not done so before, start off with 15-20 minutes of time together. Find a comfortable setting where everyone can be relatively relaxed. The living room sofa or bedroom setting may serve this purpose.
2. Use this compilation of family devotions to serve as a guide for your family devotion times together. To the extent family members are comfortable, the parent may appoint different members of the family to lead different parts of the family devotion times together. Set prayers are included. Songs of worship include a hymn and a more contemporary song. Many of these can be heard/learned from web-based music (search for them on www.youtube.com). The family can sing them or use their own songs.
3. If the family desires to create their own devotional times, include at least the following. Worship God in song, take turns to read the Word of God (you may use the same Scripture passage preached the last Sunday OR a chapter of a book from the Bible), share each other’s prayer needs, then have the head of the home lead in prayer (or pray for one another as is comfortable).
4. As your Family Devotion times mature and deepen, you may want to lengthen the time to include memorization of Scripture or a short 5 minute devotional sharing each time by the head of the home or some other member of the family.
5. As a parent, ask God before hand how He would want you to lead your family into His presence. Seek to be sensitive to His leading (the Word of God that He has been placing on your heart for your family; the impressions that the Spirit of God has been leaving on your heart; thoughts that God may have whispered through the heart of your spouse). Ask God what is that one thing that the whole family needs to be bringing before Him in prayer.
6. As priest of the family, the parent brings the family before God and renews the family’s covenant before God to serve Him and Him alone. In prayer, the parent should initiate or renew the family’s pledge of allegiance to God Almighty and seek His blessing on the family and His watching of each person’s going out and coming in each day.