

February 6, 2011 by Steve Brandon



Lessons On Prayer (Various)

1. Avoid Prayerless Praying
2. Pursue Scriptural Praying
3. Embrace the Desperation of Prayer
4. Recognize Hindrances to Prayer
5. Practice Family Prayer

As many of you know, Yvonne and I had the privilege of spending the three days last week in Minneapolis, Minnesota at the Desiring God Conference for Pastors. Phil Guske (and his son, Philip) also came along with us. It was a wonderful time. It was great to spend so much time with my wife. It was great to spend so much time with Phil and his son. It was great to spend so much time thinking about prayer, which was the subject of the conference.

I had every intention of continuing on in my exposition of Hebrews this morning by looking at Abraham. However, the things the conference were so rich and so helpful, that I thought it would be best for all of us to spend some time this morning thinking about prayer. Abraham will wait until next week.

Prayer is an area that all of us need to think about. It's an area that all of us need improvement. C. J. Vaughan once said, "If I wished to humble anyone, I should question him about his prayers". [\[1\]](#) What's true of "anyone" is probably true of you. And I know that it is true of me as well. We all need some improvement in our practice of prayer. So, this morning, we are going to think about prayer. My message is entitled, "Lessons on Prayer."

Regarding a text this morning, we are really going to be all over the place. Usually, we camp out in one single passage and mine the riches of the text. However, this morning is going to be much different. We'll be going to be turning to many different passages, so have your fingers ready.

By way of outline, I have five exhortations for you. Each of them comes through something that was mentioned in the messages that we heard. They have stirred me in my thinking and have encouraged my own soul regarding prayer. I want to elaborate on them and apply them to our hearts this morning. If you want to hear the messages, I encourage you to go to DesiringGod.org and have a listen. They will be good for your souls. You can recognize some seeds of my thoughts from these messages.

Anyway, here's my first exhortation.

1. Avoid Prayerless Praying

This is the phrase that Joel Beeke used in the opening session of the conference. He said, "We need to be delivered of prayerless praying." Do you know what he was talking about? He was talking about words that come from the mouth that are vain, empty words. Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 6. This finds us deep in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is addressing the prayers of the Pharisees. He says (in verse 5), ...

Matthew 6:5

When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

This is "prayerless praying." One could say that prayer is going on. To be sure, words are being said. Sounds are being made. But, such "prayers" are being offered in such a way as to be devoid of all power. This is what we are talking about with "prayerless praying."

You can see right here in this verse that there are other motives involved here. It's a desire to be seen by others as spiritual. Their desire is "to be seen by men." (verse 5). This is why the Pharisees prayed in the first place. They prayed for show! Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full." In other words, there was no power in their prayers. They had already received everything that they were going to get from their prayers. God wasn't planning to answer any of them.

The contrast of the "prayerless prayer" in verse 5 is the genuine prayer given in verse 6, ...

Matthew 6:6

But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who sees in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Now, it's not that we should never pray in public. No, that's not the point. Rather, the point is that the secret prayer is seeking God's approval

alone. So also with public prayer. Pray to God, not for others! And, I would say that secret prayer is the power for public prayer. Robert Murray M'Cheyne said it well. "A man is what he is on his knees before God, and nothing more." So, let us Avoid Prayerless Praying.

In verse 7 we see a few other things that contribute to prayerless praying - many words. Look what Jesus says, ...

Matthew 6:7-8

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Here's a real practical point for you. You don't need to be long in prayers to have effectual prayers. God knows what you need, so you merely need to ask Him. Such asking doesn't need to be long or ornate or flowery. It can be really simple and short.

Do you remember the accounts of Elijah and the prophets of Baal? Turn over to 1 Kings 18. He set up a challenge for them on Mount Carmel. Elijah said to the people, ...

1 Kings 18:22-24

Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God." And all the people said, "That is a good idea."

Throughout the whole day, Elijah watched all of the antics of the prophets of Baal. From morning until noon, they cried out, "O Baal, answer us" (1 Kings 18:26). When that didn't work, the prophets of Baal began leaping around the altar (1 Kings 18:26), trying to get their god to consume the sacrifice. But, Elijah simply smirked, telling them to "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened" (1 Kings 18:27).

Upon hearing that, they cried out with a loud voice to Baal (1 Kings 18:28). They also cut themselves, letting the blood of their wounds gush out all over them (1 Kings 18:28). This continued all day, "until the time of the [evening offering]," but "there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention" (1 Kings 18:29).

And so, Elijah said, "come near to me" (1 Kings 18:30). He had the people douse the offering three times with water. And then, he said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, that that You have turned their heart back again" (1 Kings 18:36-37). Fire came down from heaven and "consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kings 18:38).

The prayers of the prophets of Baal were all day long, but Elijah's was two sentences. They were offering up prayerless prayers. But, Elijah offered up a prayer that God heard and acted upon.

See, it's not the length of prayers that God wants. He wants to see us really pray when we pray. As Joel Beeke said, "Focus on the quality of prayer, not quantity." What a great piece of advice that is! When calming the storm, Jesus said, "Be still" (Mark 4:39). When raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus said, "Come Forth" (John 11:43). When feeding the 5,000, Jesus merely gave thanks and the five loaves and two fish were sufficient (John 6:9).

Let us not bore God and ourselves with long, meaningless prayers. Rather, let us pray powerful prayers, not prayerless prayers.

Well, let's move on. My next point is, ...

2. Pursue Scriptural Praying

By this, I simply mean, that we should pray the Bible back to God. One man said that God loves to hear us pray His handwriting. He has given us His word as a guide to our prayers. Doing so helps us to keep our prayers Biblical. It helps us to request for those things that God has promised. But, there is another reason for this. God's Word resonates with our hearts as well.

See, there is something about a Bible-saturated prayer that is different that the prayers that we might naturally pray. In a breakout session, David Michael gave this comparison. He said, "I want for you to listen to two prayers for my daughter. See if you can tell the difference." And so, I'll do the same thing. Imagine me in the morning praying for my oldest daughter Carissa.

"God, I pray this morning for Carissa. I pray that you would keep her safe this day. I pray that she would please you this day. Keep her safe as she drives to school today. Protect her from the temptations that will come her way. Give her a heart to praise Your name and share your grace today. Amen."

I've prayed many prayers like that in my life. But, listen to this Bible-saturated prayer, ...

"Father, according to the riches of your grace in Christ Jesus, I pray this morning for Carissa (Eph. 1). Under your wings, may she seek refuge (Ps. 91:4) May she delight herself in the LORD this day (Ps. 37:4). May you give her the desires of your heart (Ps. 37:4). Lead her not into temptation, but deliver her from evil (Matt. 6:13). May her speech today always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6). Let her light shine before others in such a way that they may see her good works, and glory our Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Amen."

I trust that you see the difference between these two prayers. One prayer is our words. The other is a prayer filled with God's words. One prayer is filled with our own thoughts. The other prayer is filled with God's thoughts. And I would encourage you to pray prayers like the second prayer. I would encourage you to Pursue Scriptural Praying.

In order to pray these sorts of prayers, Scripture needs to be upon your hearts and upon your minds. Such was the case with Jonah. Do you remember Jonah's prayer from the stomach of the fish? Turn over to Jonah, chapter 2. In this chapter, we find the disobedient prophet, having run from the Lord. He was thrown overboard by some pagan sailors, who found out that Jonah was the one causing the storm. From the midst of the stomach of the fish, Jonah prayed (verse 1), ...

Jonah 2:2-9
"I called out of my distress to the LORD,
And He answered me
I cried for help from the depth of Sheol;
You heard my voice.
For You had cast me into the deep,
Into the heart of the seas,
And the current engulfed me
All Your breakers and billows passed over me.
So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight
Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.'
Water encompassed me to the point of death
The great deep engulfed me,
Weeds were wrapped around my head.
I descended to the roots of the mountains
The earth with its bars was around me forever,
But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.
While I was fainting away,
I remembered the LORD,
And my prayer came to You,
Into Your holy temple.
Those who regard vain idols
Forsake their faithfulness,
But I will sacrifice to You
With the voice of thanksgiving
That which I have vowed I will pay
Salvation is from the LORD."

Every single one of those phrases comes from the Psalms. Jonah knew the Psalms so well, that even in the stomach of a fish, he could pray the Psalms in His distress. On the one hand, it's amazing. But, on the other hand, it's merely a display of Jonah's knowledge of, and love for, the word of God.

Now, it takes time to be able to do this. It takes a plan to memorize the Scripture. One of the things that greatly impressed me afresh was the practice of Bethlehem Baptist Church. As a church body, they memorize a verse of Scripture each week. The verse saturates all of their activities - youth group, Sunday school, Sunday mornings, small groups. They have a constant eye to help everyone memorize Scripture together. But, I know that it bears fruit in their congregation. On Thursday, I emailed one of the staff secretaries at the church. She wrote back and said, "For me personally over the last 6 years at Bethlehem, this has been revolutionary in my own time with the Word as the discipline of memorizing has been worked into the fabric of my life."

Now, it takes some work. And the people need to be committed to it. Pray for us, as we think about doing such a thing here at Rock Valley Bible Church. Such a commitment certainly must help your ability to spontaneously pray the Scripture back to God. But, until you can spontaneously pray through scattered portions of Scripture, make it your practice to pray through Scripture passages.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne once wrote to a young man with these words, ...

"You read your Bible regularly, of course; but do try and understand it, and still more, to feel it. Read more parts than one at a time. For example, if you are reading Genesis, read a Psalm also; or, if you are reading Matthew, read a small bit of an epistle also.

Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you were reading the first Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel, and pray, 'O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man,' 'Let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly' This is the best way of knowing the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray." [\[2\]](#)

And church family, I would commend to you a similar pattern as well. Work through the pages of Scripture in your prayers.

Thirdly,

3. Embrace the Desperation of Prayer

When it comes to prayer, that word, "Desperation" is a key word. Paul Miller brought this to our attention in the conference. He said, "Desperation is what you need to develop a prayer life." He said, "Sermons on prayer and discipline are good, but not essential to developing a prayer life. Desperation is what you need to develop a prayer life."

In other words, it's very possible that you can leave this place being stirred in your heart, "That was a nice sermon on prayer. I think that I would like to pray more." But, that's not going to do anything. Rather, it's only when you are helpless and desperate that you will pray.

Edward Payson said it this way: "You cannot make a man that is full cry for food like one that is hungry." This is the truth given in Proverbs 27:7, "One who is full loathes honey, but to one who is hungry everything bitter is sweet." And when we are emptied, and we have nowhere to turn, it is then that we are often ready to pray.

It was only when Manasseh found himself in a Babylonian prison that he prayed (2 Chron. 33:13). It was only when Nebuchadnezzar was out grazing like an ox, that he humbled himself and prayed to the Lord (Dan. 4:33-35). This is why the two blind men, who heard that Jesus was passing by, kept crying out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David" (Matt. 20:31), even when the crowds were telling them to be quiet. They were desperate. This is why the Syrophenician woman kept coming to Jesus, pleading for her daughter, being content with the crumbs that fall from the master's table. She was desperate.

That's why Jesus says that we need to come to God like little children, who have no other options, but to ask. This is why the truths of the gospel ought to be front and center in our prayers. Nothing creates within us a heart of desperation than when we see our position in coming before the Lord. Before God, we are but dust. He is the eternal one. We are temporary. He is the all-powerful one. We are weak. He knows all the mysteries of the universe. We know but very little. He is the holy one. We are the sinful ones. He rules the universe. We are but His servants. But, through Christ Jesus, because of His work on the cross, we are able to come to Him. What an amazing thing! Are you desperate in your prayers?

Under this point, I ask you to turn over to Matthew 11:28. This passage ministered to me as much as any passage all weekend long. For me, the biggest struggle that I seek to devote some time to prayer is distraction. I get on my knees to pray, and a zillion things come across my mind. I think of the work that needs to be done. I think of the phone calls that need to be made. I think of the meetings that need to be prepared for. I think of the shepherding that needs to take place. I think of the emails that I need to compose and send. I think of the message I need to prepare for Sunday. I think of the Bible study that I'm going to lead. Any of you have the same difficulty?

And then comes Matthew 11:28, when Jesus says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." I think about the burdens that I have, which prevent me from praying. But, Jesus says that these are the very burdens which ought to draw me to prayer in the first place. Paul Miller said something to this effect, (not his exact words). "Jesus didn't say, 'Come to me all who have figured out how to put all of your worries aside so that you might pray to me without distraction.' No, God wants the muddy you to come. When you come to God, come overwhelmed and burdened. That's exactly what He wants. He will take those burdens from you."

Such words were refreshing to my soul! See, it's precisely when we feel that we can't pray that we ought to pray. Along these same lines, Joel Beeke said, "Whenever you have the least impulse to pray, that's when you really need to pray."

Let's move on. My fourth point, ...
4. Recognize Hindrances to Prayer

This came up in the question and answer session in the conference. The question was asked to the panel, "What about unanswered prayer." At first, there was a long silence among the panel. Then, Francis Chan spoke up. He said something to the effect of this: "If God isn't answering your prayers, then you need to examine your life." He proceeded to allude to several Scriptures that place the responsibility for unanswered prayers upon us and the way that we are living or the faith that we are lacking.

So, let's spend a few moments considering the hindrances to prayer. Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 66. This is a Psalm that calls us to praise the Lord. Verse 1 tells us to, "Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; Verse 2 says to, "Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious." And the reason why the Psalmist is in a praising mood is because of God's answer to his prayer. Look down at verse 16, ...

Psalm 66:16-20
Come and hear, all who fear God,
And I will tell of what He has done for my soul.
I cried to Him with my mouth,
And He was extolled with my tongue.
If I regard wickedness in my heart,
The Lord will not hear;
But certainly God has heard;
He has given heed to the voice of my prayer.
Blessed be God,
Who has not turned away my prayer
Nor His lovingkindness from me.

Though this man saw his prayers answered, there is a reason why God doesn't answer prayer. Do you see it there in verse 18? Wickedness in the heart. When we regard wickedness in our hearts, God will not even hear our prayers!

So, however passionate your prayer may be, however Biblical your prayer may be, if there is wickedness in your heart, God will not hear your prayer. That's why it's good to rehearse the realities of the gospel before you pray. "Lord, I know that I'm a wicked man. I know that I have

wicked thoughts within me. Purge them from me. Thank you that in Christ, by faith, my sins are forgiven. I praise you that you see me in the righteousness of Christ. Help me so to live.” And then, carry on with your requests before the Lord.

Let’s look at another passage that addresses the reasons for unanswered prayer: John 15:7. Turn over there. This is a really simple passage. And yet, it’s quite profound. Jesus says, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7).

This verse gives such a high promise to us! “Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” But, there’s a condition to these things. We must be abiding in Christ, depending upon Him, walking with Him, trusting in Him. A reason for unanswered prayer might well be that you aren’t abiding in Christ, you aren’t trusting in the gospel, you aren’t trusting in Jesus alone, you aren’t abiding in His words. And thus, your prayers aren’t answered.

Let’s look at another one: 1 Peter 3:7. “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman, and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.” Your relationship with your wife may hinder your prayers. By implication, the same must be true for wives and husbands as well. If your relationships upon the earth aren’t right, it may well be that God will ignore your prayers. That’s why Jesus said, “If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matt. 5:23-24).

So, Recognize Hindrances to Prayer It may well be that there is an issue in your life which is inhibiting your prayers before the Lord. I would encourage you to recognize those hindrances and repent, and seek the one who delights to hear and answer our prayers.

It may just be that God wants for us to acknowledge that He has been silent, as a demonstration of our repentance. Turn to Jeremiah, chapter 2. In this chapter, the Lord is lamenting the apostasy of Judah. They have followed after their own ways and not the ways of God. Jeremiah is calling them on the carpet to account. Look at verse 5, ...

Jeremiah 2:5-9

Thus says the LORD,

"What injustice did your fathers find in Me,
That they went far from Me
And walked after emptiness and became empty?
They did not say, 'Where is the LORD
Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt,
Who led us through the wilderness,
Through a land of deserts and of pits,
Through a land of drought and of deep darkness,
Through a land that no one crossed
And where no man dwelt?'
I brought you into the fruitful land
To eat its fruit and its good things
But you came and defiled My land,
And My inheritance you made an abomination.

The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?'
And those who handle the law did not know Me;
The rulers also transgressed against Me,
And the prophets prophesied by Baal
And walked after things that did not profit.
Therefore I will yet contend with you," declares the LORD,
And with your sons' sons I will contend.

I trust that you see what’s happening here. God is saying, “Because you didn’t even acknowledge that I was silent, therefore, I will contend with you.” There are times when God wants us to acknowledge our unanswered prayers. It’s an act of repentance. It may well be the means through which God will turn and answer prayers.

But, there is a caution as well. It may well be that unanswered prayer is exactly what God wants for your life. Do you remember Paul’s thorn in the flesh? He was facing some type of pain and hardship. We don’t know whether this was a physical ailment or another person causing pain or a demon that was possessing him. We don’t know. But, we do know that Paul prayed three times that it might leave him (2 Cor. 12:8). And three times, God said, “No, I will not remove this from you.” Instead, God said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Do you hear what God is saying? Paul, I have heard your request regarding the pain in your life. But, in my sovereign plan, I have determined that removing this would not be best for My glory. So, I’m not going to remove it. Instead, I’m going to give you grace to endure it. So Paul says, “Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Cor. 12:9). It may well be that God has ordained something else in your life, contrary to your prayers.

Such things might be entirely contrary to what you want and think of God. He told Isaiah to go and preach to the people of Judah, “Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand. Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim.” (Is. 6:9-10). In other words, Isaiah was to preach and preach and preach, until the people totally rejected God! Any of Isaiah’s

prayers for Judah to come to faith in God would have fallen on deaf ears. Such was not in God's plan.

So, Recognize Hindrances to Prayer Sometimes, the reason why God isn't answering our prayers is because of some issue in our own lives. But, sometimes, it's because God has a better plan. Work hard to discern the difference in your unanswered prayer.

Finally, let's turn to my fifth and final point.

5. Practice Family Prayer

Of all the messages in the conference, the message that Joel Beeke gave on family worship was the most practical. At this point in my message, I want to summon you afresh to be praying together with your family. I encourage you to gather regularly for a time of family worship in your home.

By God's grace, this is an area in which I can speak from experience. Our family has consistently gathered together for family worship. It all started on June 10th, 1994, when I was in California at the Grace Book Shack and happened to glance upon a book entitled, "Thoughts on Family Worship," by J. W. Alexander. I had never heard of Family Worship before that date. I had never heard of J. W. Alexander. But, as Yvonne and I were expecting our first child in three months, the title intrigued me. So, I purchased the book. Yvonne and I read it through fairly quickly.

The thoughts in this book have probably done more to change the spiritual dynamics of our household than any other book that I have read. And as Carissa came into the world, a few months later, we consistently held a time of family worship in our home for the past 16 years. Now, certainly, the practice has changed much over the years, as our children have grown older. But, the essence of our time has remained intact. By God's grace, we, as a family, have gathered together for a time of spiritual strengthening on a consistent basis. There have been seasons when we have gathered twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. There have been seasons when we have gathered only a day or two each week. But, never has there been a time when our family has not gathered regularly to worship the Lord together.

The three elements to family worship are simply this: singing, reading and praying together. There have been times when we sang much in our family worship and read little (particularly when our children were small). There have been times when we sang little and read much (especially as our children have become older). There have been times when we have prayed much, and times when we have prayed little. But, the essence of our home has been the same. I trust, by God's grace, that our times together as a family, will do much good in the future.

Joel Beeke, who gave the message on family worship, spoke of the impact that had on his home growing up. I believe that there were five children in his family. He said that at his parents' 50th wedding anniversary he and his brothers and sisters determined that each of them would each share something about Mom and Dad that they appreciated. They didn't talk together about what they would say. Rather, they let the spirit of God move them to share an encouraging word. He said that every single one of his siblings said the same thing. They expressed appreciation for the way their mother consistently prayed for them. They expressed appreciation for the way their father consistently practiced family worship in their home.

Such is the impact that such a practice has made in his home. When the Beeke family thinks of their father, they think of the way he gathered the family so consistently for family worship. I'm trusting the Lord that a similar testimony will come from the mouths of my children at our 50th wedding anniversary.

And so, I ask you, is family worship practiced in your home? Family worship can take place in all of your homes. If you don't have any children, husband and wife can still read the Scripture together and pray together. If your children are out of the home, husband and wife can still read the Scripture and pray together. If you are not married and have a roommate, you can still read the Scripture and pray together.

You say, is it commanded in the Bible? Not directly. There is no verse that says, "You must have family worship in your home." But, in Deuteronomy 6, God told Israel, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

God calls us to love Him supremely with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. And our love to Him is to come out in teaching and training our children, all throughout the day, whenever we sit and walk and lie down and rise up. If anything, Deuteronomy 6 calls for family worship all throughout the whole day, not merely once or twice a day.

The example of Joshua is noteworthy. He pledged before all of Israel, "As for me and my house we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15). You can sense a determination within him to do whatever it takes to teach and train his children in the ways of the Lord. He's determined to teach his children diligently. And I know of no other way to do this than to worship together with them, read the Bible with them and pray together with them, which is the core of family worship.

In the New Testament, the call is the same. Fathers are told, "do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Family worship is an avenue to provide such direction to your children. My counsel to you men is this: Do something! Aim for brevity! Aim for 5 minutes. Let God grow and develop what you might do with your family.

You can do it at the breakfast table. You can do it at the dinner table. You can do it in their bedrooms, as you tuck your children in bed each night. But, here's what it is: it's going to take you men to show the initiative in these matters. Don't leave it up to your wives.

Over the years, we have done many different things as a family. We have used devotionals. We have read children's Bibles. We have read through Christian books. For a couple of years, we read through the entire Bible in a year. That was a hard deal to keep it going. Just last night, we embarked on something new for us. The idea combines a Journal and a Bible; these things are called Journibles. On one side of the page (the right side), you write out a chapter of the Bible. On the left side, you can write notes or questions. Then, you can keep them to

look back on. In one book, you have the Word of God as well as a journal. These are all some ideas. I encourage you all to enjoy family worship in your homes.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on February 6, 2011 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Spiritual Leadership, p. 103

[2] Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne