

Iron on Iron**Disciple-making begins at Home**

In the Bible, In History, and In Your Home

I. THE BIBLE CLEARLY IMPLIES DISCIPLE-MAKING MUST HAPPEN DAILY IN OUR HOMES

Matthew 28:18-20: **And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

Genesis 18:17-19: **The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”**

Deuteronomy 6:4-7: **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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.**

Only after the Babylonian exile, late in the OT history and hundreds of years after Solomon built the temple, did the local synagogues develop and people begin to worship God congregationally on a weekly basis.

Joshua 24:15: **And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”**

Psalms 78:1-8: **Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth!**

2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old,

3 things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.

4 We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

5 He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children,

6 that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children,

7 so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;

8 and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Ephesians 6:4: **Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

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1 Timothy 3:4-5: **He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?**

Proven father-led family worship is a required to be an elder. If he cannot lead family worship, how can he lead congregational worship?

1 Peter 3:7: **Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.**

Reveals the expectations of all husbands. Prayers refers to joined prayers. CHS: “[This] text would be most appropriately used to stimulate Christians to diligence in family prayer...I esteem it so highly that no language of mine can adequately express my sense of its value.”

The Bible clearly implies that discipleship must be happening in our homes

II. OUR HEROES TESTIFY TO DISCIPLE-MAKING IN THE HOME

Christians in the early church. It was the practice of many in the early church to assemble their family early in the morning and read scripture, sing a hymn, and pray. In the evening before they retired for bed, they repeated the structure from earlier. This evening family worship time was considerably longer. (see Lyman Coleman, early church historian (1841))

Martin Luther. **“Abraham [who] had in his tent a house of God and a church, just as today any godly and pious head of a household instructs his children...in godliness. Therefore such a house is actually a school and church, and the head of the household is a bishop and priest in his house.”**

The Westminster Confession (1647) and Second London Baptist Confession of 1689

The two most influential statements of faiths, adopted by thousands of churches around the world; Both had the practice of family worship explicitly included: **“God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself.”** (Section 21.6 in the LCF of 1689; 22.6 in the WCF)

Westminster Directory for Family Worship. The WCF even stated in *The Directory for Family Worship* that fathers who failed to lead their families in worship at home were to be admonished privately. If a husband or father continued to neglect this duty: **“He is gravely and sadly reprov'd by the session [that is, the elders]; after which reproof, if he be found still to neglect Family-worship, let him be, for his obstinacy in such an offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord's Supper, as being justly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend.”**

The Puritans.

Richard Baxter [1615-1691] maintained that...**Not only Scripture, but reason and experience point to the necessity for family worship.** His instructions: **“Then after supper, the head of the family is requested**

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to examine the children and the servants on what they have been taught during the day. Then the religious duties of the day conclude with family prayers and praises.”

Matthew Henry (1662-1714). Regarding FW he said, "Here the reformation must begin." **“A church in the house will be a good legacy, nay, it will be a good inheritance, to be left to your children after you.”**

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). **“...began the day with private prayers followed by family prayers, by candlelight in winter. ...Care for his children’s souls was, of course his preeminent concern. In morning devotions he quizzed them on Scripture with questions appropriate to their ages. ...Each meal was accompanied by household devotions, and at the end of the day Sarah joined him in his study for prayers.**

Spurgeon **“I trust there are none here present, who profess to be followers of Christ who do not also practice prayer in their families. We may have no positive commandment for it, but we believe that it is so much in accord with the genius and spirit of the gospel, and that it is so commended by the example of the saints, that the neglect thereof is a strange inconsistency.”**

As a pastor Spurgeon would frequently reference the biblical role of family worship in the home. Preaching from Acts 16:14 on September 20, 1891, Spurgeon addressed “Lydia, the First European Convert,” by saying, **If the gospel does not influence our homes, it is little likely to make headway amongst the community. ...true godliness has always flourished in proportion as family religion has been observed.**

Later in his sermon on Acts 16:14, Spurgeon went on to say, **‘Family prayer and the pulpit are the bulwarks of Protestantism. Depend upon it, when family piety goes down, the life of godliness will become very low. In Europe, at any rate, seeing that the Christian faith began with a converted household, we ought to seek after the conversion of all our families, and to maintain within our houses the good and holy practice of family worship.**

III. HERE'S HOW DISCIPLE-MAKING CAN HAPPEN IN YOUR HOME:

There are three elements to family worship: **read the Bible, pray, and sing.**

Read and explain the Bible.

Pray-pray through a Psalm. By doing so you not only pray for them, but teach them by example how to pray.

Sing. Get hymnals for everyone and use them. Some sing a different song each night; some sing the same song for a week.

• **Options:** Catechizing, Scripture Memory, Other Reading. When time permits, you might start with some general reading, after which you begin family worship. Or, at the close of family worship, you might take advantage the time together to read a Christian book or biography to your family.

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General reminders:

Brevity. Otherwise the experience can become tedious. You can lengthen the time

Regularity. Have a set time.

Flexibility. Every family has to flex sometime. But beware of inconsistency.