



## Family Worship September 10, 2017

### Preparation for Worship

Gather in a quiet place, free of distraction (put silenced cellphones in another room)

Decide who will lead the various parts. A family worship experience should involve everyone, *especially* children! This guide can be adapted by families of 1 or 2 people. Here are the parts:

- Reading the Call to Worship
- Reading the Scripture
- Reading the Pastor's Devotional and Our Offering to God sections
- Leading the Prayer (your own words, from notes)
- Playing the songs on a laptop, tablet, or phone (Just listen to the songs if you prefer not to sing☺) You can copy and paste the links or find them with Google.

Discuss who and what you should include in your prayer. In addition to people within the church family, also discuss friends, co-workers, and neighbors for whom you want to pray. Consider what local, national, or international concern you should include (Whoever is to lead the prayer can take notes—it's OK to look at notes when praying). A simple way to pray is to go by ACTS:

**Adoration:** giving God praise by naming God's beautiful qualities (Almighty, loving, etc.)

**Confession:** pausing for a minute for everyone to acknowledge their sin silently & privately

**Thanksgiving:** naming specific ways God has provided for needs or has answered prayers

**Supplication:** ask God to help or provide for specific people or situations

### Suggested Order of Worship

**Call to Worship** Psalm 18:1-6 (Notice God's promise to aid those facing floods)

**Song of Praise** *Oh God Our Help in Ages Past*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol7JYSw-gOU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol7JYSw-gOU)

**Scripture** 1 John 2:3-11  
**Pastor's Devotional** (Next page)

### Our Offering to God

When we hear the word "offering," we naturally think of giving money to finance God's work. We also think of the time that we volunteer to bless other people. Yet our "offering" also includes how we choose to live as "sent people" in the places where we live, work, and play.

- Reflect silently on whether there are Christian brothers and sisters whom you "hate" (defined scripturally as lacking love). Love is not about how you feel; it is how you act. You can dislike someone and still act lovingly. If it seems appropriate and helpful, consider sharing this awareness with your family.
- Commit that you will pray for several successive days for the Spirit's guidance as to what steps you should take to act lovingly, as a disciple seeking to "walk in the light."

**Prayer** (from your notes)

**Song of Faith** *Reign in Me* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSdthxieYp4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSdthxieYp4)

## Pastor's Devotional

This Lord's Day will not be forgotten! Earlier this week our awareness of Hurricane Irma motivated us to prepare our property to endure the strongest hurricane ever recorded. Many of us assumed that our homes would be destroyed. Our awareness of the coming crisis gave us time to evacuate. Now (I write on Saturday afternoon) we are relieved by news that the devastating eyewall should pass hundreds of miles to the west. Whatever we suffer, we will be deeply saddened to hear of greater losses by west coast Floridians and Caribbean neighbors.

Facing the possibility of a Cat 5 hurricane is an undeniable crisis. Yet every person should be aware of a far greater crisis—the Last Judgment. By the way, the word “crisis” comes from the ancient Greek word *krisis*, which means “to face judgement” (in English, during a crisis we must make judgments). Today's reading didn't use the word “crisis,” but described the situation also summarized in 1 John 4:17: “This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment (*krisis*): In this world, we are like Jesus.”

The greatest crisis (*krisis*) we will ever face comes when God judges whether we have received the gift of Jesus. If we are found to be in Christ, we will not be condemned (Rom 8:1). But what will be the evidence that shows that we are in Christ? We went to church? We said the right words? James said “do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves; do what it says” (1:22). Today's reading stated that “the person who says ‘I know [Jesus],’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him...whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1 John 2:4, 6). Empty words are not a sign of Jesus' life within us.

John was a young man when he heard Jesus declare at the Last Supper: “A new command I give you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35). As an old man, John applied Jesus' words to our temptation to disregard Jesus' commandment:

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them (1 John 2:9-11, Today's NIV).

Our first reaction may be to deny that we hate any of our Christian brothers and sisters (At worst, we might acknowledge that we hate non-Christian enemies who threaten our existence, though in Matt 5:44, Jesus commands us to love enemies also)!

But scripture defines “hate” not just as wanting to injure; hate is a lack of love that includes:

- 1) Having no pity on a brother in need if you have abundance (1 John 3:17)
- 2) Not showing respect to the poor or those unimportant in the world's eyes (James 2:9)
- 3) Members of Christ's body acting as if “I don't need you!” to each other (1 Cor. 12:21)
- 4) Gossip and “unwholesome talk” that doesn't “build others up” (Eph 4:29)
- 5) Unresolved conflicts that yield “bitterness, rage, and anger” (Eph 4:31)

When defined this way, I can't deny that I sometimes struggle with the temptation to hate. What about you? How grateful we can be to remember that just before he challenged us in 2:3-9, John reminded us in 1:9, “if we confess our sins, [Jesus] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from unrighteousness.” If we confess with a desire to change, Jesus will start our transformation: “If anyone obeys His word, God's love is truly made complete in him” (1:5).

Just as becoming more aware of the hurricane crisis motivates us to act, becoming more aware of our lack of love motivates us to deal with this greatest of all crises. Obey Christ's command—take whatever steps that to walk in God's light requires of you. Strive to love like Jesus!