

Address: 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022
Sun Worship Service: 10am, Sun School: 11.45am, Wed Prayer Meeting: 8pm
Website: www.sovereignhopebpc.org
Rev Dr Jack Sin: 91160948 (hp) / jacksin710@gmail.com
Elder Loke Tat Luen: tiloke822@gmail.com

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IN OUR HOMES

The 21st century homes have a greater exposure to temptation and distraction than those in the past. Christian families are under great duress due to the exacting demands of work, health issues, children's studies and in these last 2 years with the fearsome pandemic, now with



another new strain of a South African variant the contagious omicron besides the delta variant. Sadly, sabbath worship in church and the Bible are often relegated to an insignificant place, even in the Christian home. Career, internet, television, handphone games, leisure or children's interest take centre stage. Believers need to be reminded and challenged to return to or maintain a Christ-centred covenant home (Ps 127:1).

One of the joys and duties of family life is to bring up children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The psalmist quipped that children are a heritage of the Lord (Ps 127:3). Parents have an accountability to God concerning the way they relate to and nurture their children in a covenant home. Do not belittle or despise them that are young. They need the gospel of salvation too and we are to train them up in the knowledge of the Lord in their tender years. That is our sacred joy and bounden duty. Our Lord says, "Suffer [or, permit] *the little children to come unto me*" (Mark 10:14). We ought not to neglect our children and substitute Christ with other activities no matter how important they may seem to be.

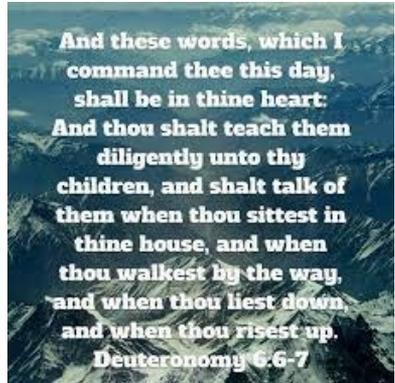
The Models at Home

Let us begin with the models of the home, which invariably will be the father and mother. Is there a close walk with God and regular devotional life, because what you do not have, you cannot give? Husbands and fathers

have to set a good example first and wives must submit to the husband so that the children will recognise and respect the authority figure in the home. Husbands, we are to love our wives as Christ has loved the church (Eph 5:23-27). Beware of the temptations of the day devised by the devil that draws us away from keeping our covenant vows. Are you committed to a covenant home based on biblical principles? Are there daily worship, prayer, and constant sharing of Christ principles and convictions where there is an opportunity? Be rooted and grounded in the word first. **Did you cleave to God and to one another in Christ, forsaking all others? There is a time for examination and reflection. You are the best model for your children to emulate.**

The Christian Home as a Nursery

The home is the most fundamental of all human institutions and it is the basic building block of the church and society. Formal or informal Christian education starts from the day the children are born until the time that they leave the home and it is the primary duty of parents and not the church nor the school (even then Christian education should still continue). There is a sober duty of every parent to fulfil in the Lord.



Young Timothy was taught at home

by his godly grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (2 Tim 1:5, 3:15) and Augustine and John Wesley by their godly mothers, Monica and Susanne respectively. The Jews have a strong home-based religious influence and the Torah is commonly read during the keeping of the convocations like the Passover and Feast of Tabernacles. Note the words of Deut 4:9–10 which says, *"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children."*

Moses gave specific instructions to the Israelites to propagate God's law to their descendants in the years to come. Not only are parents responsible to teach God's law, children are also responsible to know and keep it (Deut 6:2).

In Deut 6:7, Moses said, *"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."* God has maintained that the daily and constant reminder of His law would have a positive effect on the children of believing parents. Parents are to heed this biblical advice seriously and diligently. **We are to bring our**

children to worship on the Sabbath every Lord's day and help them to grow in the grace and knowledge of saving faith. Spend quality time with your children daily. Do not be carried away with secular duties to the neglect of the family. Deut 31:11–12 says, "When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law." Let every Christian father rally their children often together to seek God and ponder his goodness and mercies and instil good moral and ethical principles, and hence good demeanour in them.

Precepts of the Godly Family

Firstly, the all-important theme of **the Christ-centred family** is emphasised throughout the whole Bible. Families existed with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, long before human societies and nations were formed. We assert the crucial importance of Christ centredness through the teaching of scripture and not worldliness with regard to the upbringing and education of children. Eph 6:4 echoes this same theme by reminding parents to nurture their children on the discipline and instruction of the Word.

Secondly, a Christian family is characterised by **discipline with dignity**. Hebrews 12 reminds us that effective discipline is not abusive, but corrective and it is a mark of sonship. Some are afraid to discipline and others overdo it. **There is a fair and proper discipline, which builds up character and virtue and does not discourage the child's spiritual, intellectual and social development. Excessive beating or scolding may have the opposite effect and hardens the child. The lack of it may nurture a rebellious one and you did to strike a biblical balance here.** Withdrawal of benefits at certain times may be effective coupled with rewards as well for good behaviour and obedience. Pray for wisdom to do the right thing in each situation. Above all, spend quality time together to build a strong and intimate relationship with them. Know your children well and don't be ignorant of what is going on in their lives.

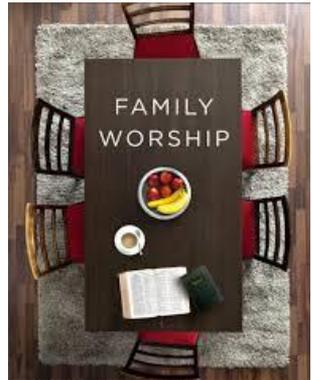


Thirdly, the Christian family seeks to follow **God's will and values** in daily living (Jas 4:13–17). Decision-making is centred on God and preceded by family prayer, led by the father. The child learns that every time he/she needs to decide on something, he / she has to consult God first through

prayer and patient waiting. The child should learn morality (what is right or wrong), not from the TV, videos and questionable websites but from the Word of God and by their parents' examples. **Values like thrift, diligence, respect, honesty, humility, godliness are inculcated over time.** Beware of the influence of worldly companions and magazines or websites that are unedifying or even immoral or ungodly. The child should grow in dependence on God, and not on himself / herself or on his / her parents or his friends or teachers.

Patterns for Family Worship

Bible reading and family worship is a necessary characteristic of a covenant home even in a pandemic. Fathers take the initiative and the lead as well. Spend time with God yourself and prepare to lead your family in worship. **The family that worships and prays together, stays together. Worship is our privilege and joy and the corporate body of a church/family is commanded to worship God together.** Try the following prayerfully:



1. Find a suitable time and place in the home for all to meet regularly, say thrice a week for a start, on a Sunday afternoon / night or weekend before dinner.
2. Sing a psalm / hymn together and open with prayer.
3. Let every member share his or her needs and / or thanksgiving.
4. Listen attentively to one another's sharing and show concern and care for them.
5. The head of the home reads a passage and shares a short exhortation. It can be reading from a devotional book. One or two appropriate practical points will do.
6. Take time to pray and let everyone have a chance to pray, if possible.

You can even have the Shorter Catechism or study a book of the bible as a start to teach them Bible doctrines systematically, or topical series that are relevant to Christian diligence, responsibility, holiness, honesty, integrity, purity, worship, godliness, stewardship, etc.

From the Scriptures, emphasise different principles of practical life and encourage obedience to the Word. **Cultivate the fear of God in them and use daily events to teach a lesson** (eg Recently, in the newspaper, coverage on mental illness and depression, anxiety disorders, someone died from violent fighting— control your anger; no fist fights, be patient and temperate, spiritual lesson on the recent deaths from the pandemic and the sovereignty of God and brevity of life). Other relevant questions can be discussed as well, eg, use of Internet, what about tattoos, and strange dressing, movies, vulgar language, drinking alcohol, dancing, social media, discos, BGR, etc. There could also be discussion on schoolwork, friendships, church ministry or family projects, like reaching out to unsaved

or the elderly or the sick, or studying through the Psalms together as a family. **Stay relevant and know what is happening to your kids**

Note that children need special attention and nurture, if you don't remember others will and that may or may not be desirable (ie if there is bad company)

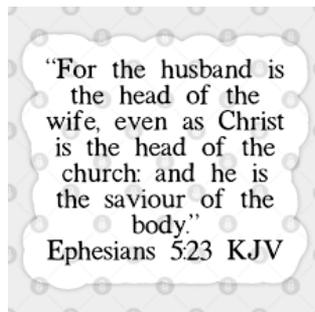
The Spiritual and social development in a child includes the following:

1. Reading the Word personally, meditating on it, applying and memorising it.
2. Learning to pray, both privately and publicly and discover and obey God's will.
3. Learning the importance of reverential worship (and attending SS class,) honouring and obeying God.
4. Learning to serve and to be a responsible steward of the manifold grace of God.
5. Learning to share the gospel, to give a tract to friends effectively.
6. Learning to fellowship with others and reach out to and care for others selflessly.
7. Learning to give proportionately and to trust the Lord's grace to provide for our needs sufficiently.
8. Learning to honour God and our parents with respect and love

Headship of the Father

The biblical teaching on the family is a hierarchy of God-given authority. Hierarchy in the family means, first of all, that the husband and father is the accountable head for what happens, and the one who is finally responsible for seeing that essential matters are happening in a family. Calvin had written, "Let the husband so rule as to be the head . . . of his wife and let the woman . . . yield modestly to his demands."

Luther had stated that "a wife is indeed to live according to the direction of her husband; what he bids and commands is to be done." And Katherine von Bora lived up to that expectation supporting the ever-busy 16th century German reformer, Martin Luther (1483-1546), Idelette de Bure, a capable woman, was a great helpmeet and blessing to the French and Genevan reformer, John Calvin (1509-1564) And Anne Judson too to Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) the pioneering missionaries to Myanmar. If we reverse the order, we court trouble in the home. Remember that the man is the head of the house and the woman, the heart of the home. And let each do their part in the upkeep of a hospitable and caring home that is a blessed refuge and nursery for their godly offspring. Man must take the leadership and responsibility lovingly and make a conscious effort to guide and direct the family in its daily decision and not relegated it to the wife or the children. Modelled on Christ's Headship of the Church, the husband's headship is not a ticket to tyranny, but a charge to responsibility based on love for his wife and submission to



God (Col 3:22–25). **Every husband is to be responsible to guide and lead the family in the right direction. The husband is the head of the home; the wife is the heart of the house. She is the God-ordained partner in the management of a Christian home. The support of a godly spouse is a favour from God and blesses all those around them (Prov 31). The best example you can give to your children is to love their mother**

OT Models for our Emulation

The godly man Job, has an excellent family practice recorded in Job 1:5, *"And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."* Do we remember to pray for and with our children every morning? Monica prayed fervently for her son and he turned out to be the great theologian, Augustine, who stood against Pelagianism in the 4th century. Susanna Wesley, another prayerful and godly lady, had two sons, Charles and John Wesley, who revived England together with George Whitefield in the 18th century. Within a family, it is important to know that a bad example can wipe out good instruction. Be sure to set a good example before your children. Other methods of instruction will not do much good if you do not teach them by a godly example. **Your children will respect the house rules you give them if you do not act contrary to those rules yourselves. If your counsels are good, but your examples are contrary, your children will be more likely to be confused or hurt by the latter, than benefit from the former.** Remember the negative example of Eli and his recalcitrant sons, which he did not discipline (1 Sam 2:12-17,22,34). Someone said, if parents would have their children blessed at church and at school, let them beware they give their children no corrupt examples at home by any carelessness, profaneness, or ungodliness. **Otherwise, parents will do them more harm at home than both churches and schoolmasters can do them good. In practice, parents have to earn the right to inculcate values and biblical principles in their children.**

Remember this: **"The best gift you can give another is a worthy example."** You can easily nullify what you have taught by doing the exact opposite. Imagine a father says to the son, "Do not watch too much TV (or computer games) it is not good for you. Now go to bed." The next thing is that the child wakes up in the middle of the night and discovers that his dad is still glued to the goggle box. So much for precept when it is not matched by practice. Things like honesty can only be taught if you are consistent (eg pirated software at home?), or diligence, industry (are you hardworking?), or godliness (do they see you praying or reading)?

The Family as a Church

A good image for the family is the **church**. Richard Baxter wrote, "a Christian family . . . is a church . . . a society of Christians combined for the better worshipping and serving God." William Gouge said that the family is

“a little church,” while William Perkins wrote, “These families wherein the service of God is performed are, as it were, little churches, yea, even a kind of Paradise upon earth.” We need to know that the church can never be a substitute for the religious life of a family. In fact, the health of the church depends on that Christian in the family. Richard Gresham claimed that “if ever we would have the church of God to continue among us, we must bring it into our households, and nourish it in our families.” William Cartwright insisted that catechising should be carried on “both at home by the master of the house, and in the church by the minister.” To the question, “Why at home?” He replied, “**Because houses are the nurseries of the church.**”

Wise Solomon in Proverbs 24:3–4, says, “*Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*” So the home is not a matter of concrete bricks, but of spiritual wisdom and the understanding of God’s Word. The rooms in the home are not just filled with worldly things, clothes, accessories, but spiritual knowledge of biblical truths and the wardrobe of godly characters are to be put on everyday. That requires great energy and effort to prayerfully build up a spiritually stable and sound Christian home. **The architect is God and He used the parents as His agents and instruments. To construct and erect a vibrant, blessed, Christ-centred outfit and testimony of covenant grace and mercies for the inhabitants and all around them. We need to depend and submit to God alone and put Him first always.**

Conclusion

The covenant family provides a good test case for us to apply our belief in covenant theology. Covenant means relationship and a set of privileges and obligations to abide by, first to God and then to other persons. The purpose of a family is to glorify God. The family is ideally a place of sanctified relationships and the worship of God and the enrichment of one another. A well-ordered family is a hierarchical one in which the husband/father is the accountable head, the wife/mother his subordinate with her own spheres of responsibility, and children subject to the discipline and nurture of both parents (Eph 5:24–26; Col 3:24). **Proper child development is not about building self-esteem or positive thinking as some secular psychologists would have told us to do.** Like us, children are fallen creatures whose sinful bent is to be redirected toward God and moral goodness through Jesus Christ our Lord. The foundation of good childbearing is the influence by example of parents and other “significant others” as well as precepts of the Scriptures, and a balance between restraint and positive support. **Above all, the parents are to teach their children the knowledge of the Christian religion so that God willing, our children may receive eternal happiness through the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, even in the midst of this raging health crisis.**

A historic document concerning the family was the 1677 resolution of the members in Dorchester, Massachusetts, to undertake a reformation of their lives. Part of the covenant that they signed was the resolve: **to reform our**

families, engaging themselves to a conscientious care to set up and maintain the worship of God in them and to walk in our houses with committed hearts in a faithful discharge of all domestic duties: educating, instructing, and charging our children and our households to keep the ways of the Lord. We need a reformation today too. **It is not just a resuscitation of an ailing economy that is needed in this global pandemic, it is a reformation of true religion in domestic life and it starts with our individual families when we humble ourselves and cry to God for repentance and divine assistance to bring up our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Deut 6:6–7).**

Jack Sin

(For deeper studies, read John R Rice, *The Home*, Sword of the Word Publishers, 1974; Susan Hunt, *Heirs of the Covenant*, Crossway Books, 1998; Clay Trumbull, *Hints on Child Training*, Great Expectations book Company, nd and David Manis, *Healing the Dysfunctional Family*, Victor Books 1984.)

SOVEREIGNHOPE
bible presbyterian church
presents

CHRISTMAS
Eve Service
**WHEN
GOD
BECAME
MAN**

24 Friday
DEC

SPEAKER
REV PHILIP HENG

LOCATION
160 Paya Lebar Road Orion @ Paya Lebar
#04-06 Singapore 409022

ALL ARE WELCOME
Please inform Di Yue Kay by 20 Dec 2021
at 97450311

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE
31 December 2021

**A BETTER
HEAVENLY
PLACE**

John 14:1-6

—*—*—*—

The service will be held at
SOVEREIGN HOPE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar
#04-06 Singapore 409022
www.sovereignhopebpc.org

Memory Verse

Neh 9:2 And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks today on “***The Exemplary Fervent Intercession***” (*Neh 9:1-21, 35-38*), continuing the quarterly theme of “***A Biblical Paradigm for Triumphant Christian Service***”.
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on “***Why We Need to Keep the Covenants***” (*Neh 10:28-39*).
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - Understanding Biblical Eschatology & related Topics – Joseph
 - Studies in Numbers – Dn Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China on alternate Sundays. Join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. Neighbourhood Bible Class meets on every first Friday of each month on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
8. Fide Vitae is giving a 20% discount on all books for the month of December.
9. Those who wish to bring a new friend to the worship service, kindly inform the safety officer Dn Yue Kay or Pastor at least a day in advance.
10. The Pandemic book can be purchased through Dn Yue Kay (Hp: +65 97450311) or via email at sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com.
11. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
12. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
