



Sample Family Discipleship Plans

Sample 1: Danielle and Tim Miles

What are the ages of your children?

We have four kids ages 4,7,8 and 10.

Corporate Worship

1. How does/did your family prioritize Corporate Worship into your family rhythms.

We intentionally have planned and committed to attend the 8:15 Sunday morning worship together and we all attend Sunday School.

2. What are common pitfalls that can make prioritizing Corporate Worship feel hard?

Being non-committal to the specific time that we attend Corporate Worship.

3. What benefits have you seen from making Corporate Worship a priority in your home?

Structure, having consistent exposure to God's word, and our kid's love fellowshiping with members of the church body. We have seen the grooves start to begin to ingrain in our children.

God's Word

1. How do/did you prioritize the teaching/reading of God's word into your family rhythms?

When our kids were little, we would frequently and consistently read the Jesus storybook Bible to the kids. During my time homeschooling we would read the Bible daily and incorporate it into our lesson. Outside of that our kids are encouraged to read their Bible. As the parents we also try to be consistent with reading and listening to the bible. We have ongoing conversations about what we are reading and how we apply things in the bible to everyday life.

2. What resources have you loved for enjoying God's Word with your children?

- The Chosen
- Gospel & Worship Music
- Shai Linnie's Jesus Kids album
- Streetlights Bible
- Yoto Player Books of the Bible cards
- New City Catechism app and book

3. What are common pitfalls that can make prioritizing God's Word feel hard?

A busy schedule, physical and mental fatigue, and inflexibility

4. What benefits have you seen from making God's Word a priority in your home?

Our kids trust God's word, and they are interested in learning about what is in the Bible. Because the Bible is the foundation for our lives Biblical correction and encouragement is not foreign to them. We oftentimes point them to scripture to address any given situation.



Prayer

1. How does/did your family prioritize Prayer into your family rhythms.

Although family rhythms is an area we currently are in need of growth, we address prayer requests with our kids that come up throughout the day. We pray with our kids about their needs and the needs of others. And we teach our kids that we can always pray to God about anything. Whether it be their fears, disputes, excitements, or concerns.

2. Are there particular moments in your home that you've found helpful to redirect to Prayer?

Whenever our kids are anxious or fearful we always push them to take that to the Lord in prayer.

3. What are common pitfalls that can make prioritizing Prayer feel hard?

In light of sit down consistency, it is hard to get everyone to cooperate and sit down for quiet prayer time.

4. What benefits have you seen from making Prayer a focus in your home?

We have seen how prayer helps our kid's emotions, and disposition. It also allows for several moments of thankfulness and gratitude when God answers a specific prayer request in the way that we asked.

Random

What are some of your favorite parenting books/resources?

Mom Enough, New City Catechism

We talk to older people who have lived through our stage of life. We also like to share with peers what is going on in our current stage.



Sample 2: Leesa and Larry Jensen

What are the ages of your children?

3 adult children

Corporate Worship

1. How does/did your family prioritize Corporate Worship into your family rhythms?

Corporate worship was the "big rock" in our family rhythms before other "smaller rocks" were poured into our lives. It was pretty much a non-negotiable for our family. Our children were involved in travel sports, but these were not as demanding as competitive sports teams seem to be these days. We worked around Sunday worship the majority of the time during sports seasons. We also prioritized the Missions Conference and having missionaries in our home, when possible.

2. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing Corporate Worship feel hard?

Some of the challenges to corporate worship that we've seen are the busy-ness of life and the flesh, our human nature--i.e., sports or other "opportunities" on Sundays or feeling like "I need a break; it's better for me to stay home and catch up today." Parents may also experience push back from their children for various reasons that make it feel hard to attend corporate worship regularly. Ultimately, the secret to prioritizing corporate worship, in our opinion, is the heart of the parents--setting the tone of the joy and privilege we have to worship the Lord and setting the loving example that Sundays are "the Lord's special days".

3. What benefits have you seen from making Corporate Worship a priority in your home?

Hopefully, we modeled a home life that was centered around the Lord, His Word, and His Body, the church--in the midst of living an everyday life of school, sports, community involvement, and life with friends and extended family.

Our adult children now have a personal relationship with the Lord through Jesus Christ and are choosing to raise their children in church. They have made corporate worship a priority in their own homes. We are grateful for God's great grace in our lives.

God's Word

1. How do/did you prioritize the teaching/reading of God's word into your family rhythms?

For us, as the parents, spending individual, personal time with the Lord daily in the morning was our priority and routine. Our children saw this in our lives. We tried to "live, move, and have our being" around the Lord and His Word, talking about Him as well as meaningful Bible verses and applications as just a regular part of life together. (Dt. 6) We attempted to simply "do life" with the Lord Jesus and the Word of God as the center. We did not do this perfectly and we failed plenty of times, but I think we can honestly say that this was the desire of our hearts for our family.

Our most regular times of family devotions came in the morning around the breakfast table. We sometimes used an age-appropriate devotional book, but often one of us would share a verse from our quiet time that morning and we would try to apply it to their lives at their age/stage. We closed in prayer and usually asked if they had any prayer requests. We kept it simple! We tried to teach/model regular



reading of the book of Proverbs, according to the day of the month. One year, when they were in college, we gave each of them a Chronological Bible and we all read it that year. That was a special year.

2. What resources have you loved for enjoying God's Word with your children?

We mostly simply used the Bible, but, at times, we did have age-related devotional-type books as well as devotionals that went along with the church calendar (Advent, Lent/Holy Week).

3. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing God's Word feel hard?

Common pitfalls: time crunch, lack of responsiveness or pushback from the children, not feeling equipped

4. What benefits have you seen from making God's Word a priority in your home?

Hopefully, we modeled a love for God's Word and helped it to come alive for our children. We attempted, by His grace, to follow the priorities for our lives and home that God lays out in His Word. We attempted to teach and model that the Word of God is sufficient for their every need and that it is a means of grace for knowing Him and for knowing the way in which each of us should walk. Our adult children value God's Word and have regular personal and family times with the Lord through His Word. They are teaching the Word to their children.

The Word of God has a supernatural power and He promises that it will never go out and return without accomplishing what He desires. Our goal was to live out the Word in front of our children, by His grace, and then to intentionally plant the seeds of the Word in their hearts and nurture those seeds with prayer, corporate worship, fellowship/youth activities--and then trust Him to be faithful to His Word.

Prayer

1. How does/did your family prioritize Prayer into your family rhythms.

We tried to prioritize praying with our children in the mornings and evenings--to send them into their school day with prayer and a bit of God's Word and to end their days with prayer. We prayed around the breakfast table or in the car on the way to school and at dinner. When they were small, we always prayed when we tucked them in at night. We also tried to model that we can talk to God anytime and all the time about whatever is on our hearts.

This continued for most of the years until they left for college, but, of course, it was more challenging when they started driving and were out later at night. But, for the most part, our family devotional times (Word and prayer) were at breakfast.

2. Are there particular moments in your home that you've found helpful to redirect to Prayer?

In our best moments as parents, we prayed together for our children and for help/direction in training/disciplining them. There were times, as they grew older, that we prayed with them as part of our discipline, asking for God's forgiveness, help, wisdom.

3. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing Prayer feel hard?

Same as with the Word.



4. What benefits have you seen from making Prayer a focus in your home?

Same as with the Word.

Random

1. What are some of your favorite parenting books/resources?

The Word of God

A Bible-believing church and youth group

Youth group leaders/mentors

2. Anything else you'd like to share?

In my opinion (Leesa), the most important thing for a parent is his/her own personal relationship and walk with the Lord. It is a powerful thing in the lives of children when their parents live, love, and lead from their own relationship with the living God. Children need to see the reality of an ordinary person, a sinner, who authentically, by grace, orders his/her life in a way that "seeks first the Kingdom of God"--and then leads his/her family to do the same.

Also, we made intentional efforts to have our children be a part of outreach mission/volunteer (community, world missions). Our hope was for them to catch a vision for God's work in the world. Eph. 2:8-10 are foundational verses for raising children--salvation by the grace of God alone and then being His workmanship, created for good works in His Kingdom.



Sample 3: Emily and Graham Farnsworth

What are the ages of your children?

9, 7, 4, 2

Corporate Worship

1. How does/did your family prioritize Corporate Worship into your family rhythms.

We have tried to make corporate worship a part of our weekly schedule – the 8:15 worship service and evening worship are never a question of if we’re going or not (assuming we’re in town and not sick 😊). We all anticipate it as part of our weekly rhythm, just as we do school and sports practices/games. We try to keep Saturday as low-key as possible so that we are ready to make it to worship on Sunday morning.

We attempt to make as much of the service accessible to our kids as possible (each child brings a portion of their weekly allowance to share in the offering plate, school age kids sign the red pad etc.). Making the service accessible helps our kids feel more excited about being in the service.

In the car on the way to worship we periodically set age-appropriate expectations and give reminders for what the service should look like for each child. This can vary from (“Remember when it’s time to pray to stop coloring and close your eyes so you can pray with us,” “Remember to try to follow along in the bulletin when we sing,” “Write down 30 words you hear the pastor preach that you think sound important to the lesson,” “During the reading of God’s word, make sure you have your Bible open and follow along with the rest of the congregation as we read”).

2. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing Corporate Worship feel hard?

It can feel like it takes away from the calm of the weekend – having to get ready to leave the house early in the morning can be hard, especially when we’ve had a busy week and have felt like Sunday is just another day we are rushing to get out the door.

It can also feel like we need to make sure our kids are “entertained” or have something to do to make it through the service. We try to remind them, and ourselves, that corporate worship is not about being entertained, but rather about worshipping God with his family - that we won’t always feel excited or entertained in the service, but that by using self-control and participating in as much of the service as possible, we are loving our brothers and sisters sitting around us and worshipping him.

3. What benefits have you seen from making Corporate Worship a priority in your home?

Our kids ask if it’s “church day” and are, usually, excited about going to church. They look forward to bringing their tithing, getting a bulletin, and participating in the singing. They really enjoy the music as a way to worship - it has been a joy to hear them singing songs from church throughout the week, recalling God’s truths to and with each other.



God's Word

1. How do/did you prioritize the teaching/reading of God's word into your family rhythms? (Please be sure to include the cadence- nightly, weekly, etc. Also helpful would be to include how YOU prioritize God's word in your own walk with the Lord in addition to how you prioritize as a family.)

- Having our kids sit with us in the morning while we are working on our church-related Bible study materials or devotionals. They have their own materials to work through or just sit with us and read books or color.
- Reading a kid's devotional book on the way to school – one of our older two will read as I drive.
- -Listening to worship songs as we get ready for the day and/or as we drive to school – have made a “morning playlist” of worship songs, scripture songs, and songs we regularly sing at church.
- -Praying before meals
- -Reading from a Bible storybook before bed (although we struggle to make this a consistent nightly activity)
- -Praying & singing before bed
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2. What resources have you loved for enjoying God's Word with your children?

- The Bible.
- Children's storybook bibles (*The Jesus Storybook Bible*, *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*, *The Beginner's Bible*, *The Action Bible*, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, *God's Big Promises Bible Storybook*)
- Also books like *Everything a Child Should Know About God* and *Bible Stories Every Child Should Know* have been good resources for us to read through at night.
- This year we've given them their own study materials to work alongside us as we study God's word in the morning – they each, dependent upon age, have a guided journal or Bible activity/coloring book they can use while sitting at the table with us.
- Kid's devos: *Indescribable*, *The Ology*
- Kid's activities we are using while we do our Bible studies: *Boys/Girls Who Seek God* journal (Tiny Theologians); *Seek and Find Old Testament Stories/Seek and Find New Testament Stories*; *The Beginner's Bible coloring book*; *The Bible Recap Kids' Devotional*

3. What are common pitfalls that can make prioritizing God's Word feel hard?

- That our personal time with the Lord has to be quiet, at the right time, and for a certain amount of time - that's just not usually feasible in our stage of life!
- That our children are too squirrely to sit and read the Bible with us or sit through a worship service - they may be active and it may not seem like they are listening most of the time, but the things they communicate to us days/weeks/months later show they have been listening.

4. What benefits have you seen from making God's Word a priority in your home?

Being able to frame discussions about struggles with siblings, friends, school, etc. with a Christian worldview - they understand, in their own ways, the basics of God's redemptive plan for their lives and are able to engage in discussions about how to approach life's problems with glorifying God as the end goal.



The majority of songs that our kids sing are worship/praise songs. Some songs come home with them from school, but they tend to gravitate towards songs they hear at church and songs we play from kids' scripture song playlists.

They volunteer to read a Bible story or devotional book to siblings. Even if they can't read yet, there are days that they gravitate towards their Bible storybooks and we find them pretending to read the stories aloud to themselves or their siblings. It's sweet to see them sharing the truths of God's word with each other!

Prayer

1. How does/did your family prioritize Prayer into your family rhythms? In terms of family rhythms, we model prayer in our personal quiet times (not audibly, but just in action at the table, if they are awake they may see us in prayer). At first this felt very awkward as someone watching you have a quiet moment with the Lord feels almost taboo (go into a closet and pray), but realizing that them witnessing us pray on our own demonstrates that we do actually believe what we say and that prayer isn't just a checklist for meals and bed.

We usually have kids take turns praying with a focus on thankfulness at meal-times and have encouraged them to create their own prayers as the spirit leads from as early as possible. With each child this looks different, and it has been sweet to experience what they feel led to pray that I wouldn't, and a great reminder that in prayer we can pray whatever is on our minds and hearts.

Bedtime is another opportunity to model prayer and share in a family prayer. On different nights this can look like everyone taking turns praying, splitting up into different bedrooms of 3 and 3 to pray, or saying the Lord's prayer and concluding with the doxology or another hymn we are practicing.

2. Are there particular moments in your home that you've found helpful to redirect to Prayer?

At this point in our young kids' lives we have felt like we usually have the answer for their problems. The times when we don't (i.e. friend moving away, hurt feelings at school), redirecting them to prayer, modeling how we can pray for other people and ourselves has been a growing experience for them and us. As they are getting older, we also try to remind ourselves that we don't have to have all the answers and even if we think we do have it, directing them to prayer when they face difficulty is helping them build those "gospel grooves" in their lives so that when they are on their own, that becomes their first response. As in so much of parenting, this is a true test of how much we believe in the power of prayer, and as in so much of being a Christian, God provides beautifully when we trust him.

3. What are common pitfalls that can make prioritizing Prayer feel hard?

Time is probably the biggest factor in not prioritizing prayer for us. When prayer becomes just a system for prepping for dinner or bedtime, it feels like something just to get through to get to the end goal of eating or sleeping. Reminding ourselves as adults that prayer is "pouring out our hearts to God" helps to reframe this time and decrease the speed with which prayer is completed.



Each child internalizes the idea of prayer (as well as everything else) in their own way and in their own timing. As parents, we can feel panicked if we feel like a child isn't "progressing" in their prayer autonomy at the rate we deem fast enough or independent enough.

4. What benefits have you seen from making Prayer a focus in your home?

Prayer has been a helpful way for our children to process transitions and strong emotions. Being able to communicate that faith in God allows us to come to Him with anything we are thinking and feeling has been a wonderful way to lead our children towards dependence upon Him. In the unknown of back-to-school worries, we can lead our children towards confidence, through prayer, in God's presence going with them. In the sadness of friends moving away, we've been able to reassure them that God hears their sadness and will give comfort. In the difficulty that comes from living away from extended family, we've seen prayer calm our children's hearts after we've left grandparents' or cousins' houses or they have gone back home after visiting us. In seasons where we have been focused as a family on praying for someone else, it has increased our awareness of the needs of others and has helped remind our children (as well as us) to look outside of ourselves.

We have been consistently reminded that prayer looks different for every person. It is a personal conversation between you and God. Personally, we are reminded to take prayer more seriously when we hear our children pray.

Random

Anything else you'd like to share?

It is really helpful to remember that our actions speak so much louder than our words. Our children may not listen to what we tell them, but they will watch what we do and how we live. If we don't model the heart behind the actions, they will see through it. Obviously, as totally depraved sinners, our parenting will not perfectly model what we would hope it to show, but if our kids consistently hear us shush them when we watch TV, but let them do what they want in the halls of the church; or watch us spend hours on our hobbies, but only give one hour to God at one church service a week; or rush out the door to be on time for school each day, but come half an hour late to the service; they will see what matters to us. It is a constant reminder and conviction that Paul says to "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1Cor 11:1). We do not gain our salvation through our works and neither will our children, but if we want our witness to reveal our love for Christ, we must live with that in mind.

While we would love to read a Bible story every night, memorize a verse a week, progress through our catechism book, and learn a hymn to sing together at bedtime, much of our family "Christian life" isn't structured - we don't always set aside specific times for praying and Bible reading. We do try to incorporate regular rhythms, we want to impress upon our children that Jesus has to work in our hearts before our lives can be changed - we can't just muscle through these "Christian tasks" to grow in our faith. A lot of our discussions about God and faith and worship arise naturally from events that happen in our daily lives: our struggles, praises and sins as parents and theirs as children. As much as we can as fallen, sinful parents, we try to incorporate God in all the aspects of our family life. Sometimes this is verbalized in what we are doing ("Thank you, God, that we have strong bodies to play outside;" "Thank you, God for this food we are about to eat;" Thank you, God that family came to visit.") and sometimes it's an inward appreciation for all that God works in and through us.



Sample 4: Jen and Chris Devine

What are the ages of your children?

14, 12, 7

Corporate Worship

1. How does/did your family prioritize Corporate Worship into your family rhythms. We block out Sundays and Wednesdays for Church activities.
2. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing Corporate Worship feel hard? Families can feel like they need to have things together to go to church. There is great value in just showing up, even if you are 45 minutes late or in a bad mood etc. Activities, sports and weekend travel are also common pitfalls that keep people from being consistent in church.
3. What benefits have you seen from making Corporate Worship a priority in your home? Every week hearing God's word, singing and being around other believers.

God's Word

1. How do/did you prioritize the teaching/reading of God's word into your family rhythms? (Please be sure to include the cadence- nightly, weekly, etc. Also helpful would be to include how YOU prioritize God's word in your own walk with the Lord in addition to how you prioritize as a family.) Our normal rhythm is nightly family devotions for 2-5 min before bed. We started this 14 years ago when our oldest was a baby. Even though he didn't understand what we were doing, it helped us to make this a priority and habit. It has now been a part of our evening routine for 14+ years. Us doing family devotions is as normal of a rhythm as eating dinner or brushing teeth at night. We have also encouraged our kids to read some sort of a Bible/devotional resource on their our regularly for a few minutes in the morning.
2. What resources have you loved for enjoying God's Word with your children? The Bible, Cover to Cover (Jen's devotional book), Jesus Storybook Bible.
3. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing God's Word feel hard? Families can feel like it needs to be a "Bible lesson" or focused teaching time. In reality, there is great value in just opening up the Bible as a family and reading a verse. Even if it only takes 10 seconds and is flustered.
4. What benefits have you seen from making God's Word a priority in your home? Sometimes, we don't feel like doing family devotions or reading the Bible, but there is much value in just "showing up" in the Christian life. Sometimes the last thing we feel like doing as a family is opening up the Word (we are too tired or frustrated or busy or scattered), but we do it anyway trusting that by faith God is using it.



Prayer

1. How does/did your family prioritize Prayer into your family rhythms.

We pray as a part of our family devotions and before meals. We also look for big and small opportunities to pray with our kids. Jen and I pray every night, just the two of us, before bed for a minute or two. Sometimes we don't feel like it, but we still make it a habit and have been very blessed by praying together over the years.

2. Are there particular moments in your home that you've found helpful to redirect to Prayer? Big moments and small moments.

3. What benefits have you seen from making Prayer a focus in your home? Dependence on the Lord.

Random

What are some of your favorite parenting books/resources? The Bible... we ask the question... "How does God parent us... and how can we reflect this in our parenting? Heartfelt Discipline: Following God's Path of Life to the Heart of Your Child by Clay Clarkson, The Mission of Motherhood by Sally Clarkson

Anything else you'd like to share? A key part of our discipleship in our family over the years has also been prioritizing "Mission" in addition to Worship, God's Word and Prayer. I think it is important for mission to be integrated as a part of family discipleship to build our identity as Christ's ambassadors (in addition to our identity as his children and disciples). To follow Christ is also to follow Him in mission.



Sample 5: Jeremy Turner

What are the ages of your children?

9

1. How does/did your family prioritize Corporate Worship into your family rhythms. – I normally bring it up on Friday or Saturday to remind Dani of our plans to attend. Sometimes I do this in question form, such as, “What are you going to wear to church on Sunday?” or “I wonder what George is going to talk about this Sunday?”
2. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing Corporate Worship feel hard? - Coming up with excuses and reasons at 6:30am on Sunday morning for not getting up and going
3. What benefits have you seen from making Corporate Worship a priority in your home? – I find both of us to be in better moods and feeling mentally refreshed for the coming work/school week

God's Word

1. How do/did you prioritize the teaching/reading of God's word into your family rhythms? (Please be sure to include the cadence- nightly, weekly, etc. Also helpful would be to include how YOU prioritize God's word in your own walk with the Lord in addition to how you prioritize as a family.) – We are probably more of a weekly cadence although nightly should be a new goal. We both do a good job of wondering what would Jesus do or what would God want us to do when we are discussing life lessons and questions about the day's challenges.
2. What resources have you loved for enjoying God's Word with your child(ren)? – We listened to the 2PC app and sermons we miss. We also have enjoyed youth bibles that were gifts from our church family
3. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing God's Word feel hard? – I would have to say putting our own rules and expectations before God's word. Being a little too easy on ourselves and not holding our home to the standards God would want.
4. What benefits have you seen from making God's Word a priority in your home? – A better sense of right and wrong. How to serve other before ourselves. Better values.

Prayer

1. How does/did your family prioritize Prayer into your family rhythms. – This is something where we need to improve. Starting with a blessing before we eat.
2. Are there particular moments in your home that you've found helpful to redirect to Prayer? (For example, moments of transition, moments of crisis, etc.) - Again, a place where we need to improve. As a father, I should probably pray before disciplining.



3. What are common pitfalls that can making prioritizing Prayer feel hard? - Leading with my own emotion, thoughts and words rather than praying for calm rationale, Spirit led direction.

Random

Anything else you'd like to share? – Being a parent is the hardest thing I have ever done. Overall, I think I am doing a good job but it is funny how when I reflect on a day or a week, I see all of my failures as a Dad rather than my successes.