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Children and the Worship Service

"The greatest stumbling block for children in worship is that their parents do not cherish the hour. Children can feel the difference between duty and delight. Therefore, the first and most important job of a parent is to fall in love with the worship of God.

You can't impart what you don't possess."

John Piper

A Guide for Parents



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Children and the Worship Service

When the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the believers in Ephesus, he included instruction for every family member: husbands, wives and children. (Ephesians 5:22f) Since the letter was read aloud for all to receive instruction, it is assumed that the children were present for the reading. We at Grace Bible Church believe that, though there is no direct command in Scripture, there is great benefit in having our children in our worship services with us. Though we do provide classes for younger age groups, we encourage families to worship together. In wanting to provide some help for parents who want to keep their children in the service with them, we have compiled some guidelines to make their worship time more beneficial. If you are a parent considering including your son or daughter in our worship service we hope these helpful hints will be of encouragement to you.

As you read through these suggestions, keep in mind three main goals in training your children for worship; that your children learn early and as well as they can to worship God heartily; that you are able to worship; that no one around you is distracted from worshipping.

- 1 If you know what the Scripture passage will be for the coming Sunday, read it together several times during the week.
- 2 Please greet children warmly before and after the service, by name when possible, so that they feel totally included.
- 3 Allow time for a drink and bathroom before church to minimize the need to exit during the service.
- 4 As the service begins, have your entire family stand or sit with the entire congregation.
- 5 Encourage your children to bring their Bibles with them to the service and help them locate key verses for the morning.
- 6 Encourage note taking. Have your children obtain and use the children's sermon outlines. Help your children fill out the outline during the sermon and review it with them after the sermon.
- 7 Encourage your children to greet other members of the congregation. When you make introductions, always introduce your children and introduce yourself to other people's children.
- 8 If your children need a diversion at some point, have them read or look through a children's Bible, or possibly even drawing a picture of what the preacher is speaking about (as opposed to playing with toys). Make the diversion God-centered when possible.
- 9 If your children are having a difficult time remaining quiet in the service, or they are creating a distraction

to the worshippers around you, please feel free to use the lobby until such a time as you may return to your seat.

- 10 Please do not allow children to run down the aisles or play near the platform.
- 11 Include your children in the fellowship time after the service and instruct them in appropriate behavior.
- 12 Help your children become acquainted with the pastors. Let your children greet them.
- 13 Spend time after the service asking your children about what they have learned. The sermon outlines can be of help here. This can be done on the ride home or over lunch.
- 14 Do not underestimate your children's ability to benefit from the worship service...including the sermon. They may not understand everything, but you may be surprised at what they do get.

"You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from your childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:14-15.

Remember, training your children to participate in a worship service is not a onetime lesson. It is a process that takes many years of instruction and will grow as they do.

"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