

# Family Altar

**TEXT:** Deuteronomy 6:1-15; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE:** Deuteronomy 11:18-21

**KEY VERSE:** Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. —  
Proverbs 22:6

A family altar or a systematic approach to devotions and religious instruction is a practice ordained by God. It is the responsibility and privilege of parents to present the knowledge of God to their children. This can be done through the study of the Word of God, prayer, and through the example lived by the parents. Instruction in God's Word was not optional. God commanded the Children of Israel to diligently teach their children.

1. Some of the earliest examples of family altars are found in the Old Testament. Using the following Scriptures as references, finish the verses and name the person each verse is referring to.

Genesis 18:19 — For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him,

Joshua 24:15 — But as for me and my house,

2. The family altar includes praying for the children as well as instructing them in God's Word. How often and for what reason did Job do this? See Job 1:5.

3. God commanded the Children of Israel to teach the Law to their children so it would be well with them, "lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee." Compare running a relay race to passing on the Word of God to our children.

4. If a man is faithful to teach his children the truth of God's Word, what is the reward or promise (Proverbs 22:6)? In view of this Scripture, how is it that some people who received godly training in their youth are not Christians today?

5. The family altar is not just a few moments of meditation, but the spirit of family worship should prevail continually. There are many things which can choke out the Word and make it unfruitful. It is important that the concerns of the parents do not negate the time of family worship. What can be done to keep the spirit of worship in the home?

6. How old should a child be before the parents start teaching him the Word of God? (See Isaiah 28:9 and 2 Timothy 3:15.) What are some of the ways in which teaching can be started at an early age?

7. Should the responsibility of teaching the Word of God to children be that of the Sunday school teacher and the preacher alone? Qualify your answer.

8. Reading lengthy portions of Scripture and having prayer might be a very limited form of family worship. List some interesting ideas for variety during this valuable time together.

**THOUGHT PROVOKER:** The average child watches 18,000 hours of television by the time he graduates from high school. This is about 2 hours and 45 minutes each day. Do you think God should have equal time?