

There are however other benefits arising from the observance, which ought not to be overlooked. Indirect influences not always contemplated are surely exerted by the exercise. The head of a family is in a manner bound over to a course of conduct in keeping with the solemn services daily observed; for the sake of consistency, he is obliged to exclude in the daily practices and in the nightly amusements whatever would be at variance with a family acknowledgment of an ever-present and all-seeing God.

Should there unpleasantness arise, or any thing happen to embitter the feelings of any members of the family, the hour of prayer, that brings all together before the just and impartial God who insists that we shall exercise forgiveness to others, before we obtain pardon from *him*, seems to restore the sweetness, and each is softened, humbled, reconciled, in the exercise.

We may add that the performance of this duty in the household secures respect for the head and adds weight to his authority. His commands and prohibitions, other things being equal, will be better observed; his government will be stronger, and the correlative obligations and duties be less frequently confounded. Parent and child, master and servant, will acquit themselves of the responsibilities of their respective positions with a clearer perception of propriety.

Real piety in the family, exhibiting itself in earnest and united prayer, accompanied as it ever should be with reverential reading of God's word, diffuses an atmosphere of religiousness through the house, enabling parents to enforce their commands, and inflict penalties when incurred, without seeming to be harsh or unkind.

It is important that family worship should be so conducted as to draw out the devotion of the household and to interest the members. To this end the prayer should respect in its confessions, family sins and offences; in its thanksgivings, family mercies should form the topic; in its petitions, the wants and necessities, which each can feel, should be laid before God. The church and the covenant relations of the family to it, should not be forgotten. Sometimes it may be proper to enlarge more than at others, but prayer in the family should never be long, and where there are young children should studiously be made short and to the point, avoiding much which they cannot understand and can feel no interest in. Many good men make a sad mistake in respect to this matter. When children are uninterested they grow weary and inattentive, and look upon the hour of worship with anything but pleasure. At such seasons, however, each should feel an interest and delight, which feelings can be better secured by the manner of conducting the service than otherwise. Long prayers, where there are a great variety of topics, are out of place in households where there are children. If older Christians sometimes sleep under such circumstances at the prayer meeting, it is not to be wondered at if children play on their knees while similarly situated in the family. Every parent should seek to keep the family in a devotional frame; family worship fails in an important point when it does not secure this. A few minutes is quite long enough for the prayer, on ordinary occasions; if more time is at our disposal, let us spend it in singing and reading.

Children will soon learn to take part in these exercises, and feel interested in them. It is a good way, when children can read with tolerable fluency, to let them with the other members of the family read around a verse or two each. In some families each recites a verse from memory, and some rehearse the ten commandments. Whatever is profitable and will keep up the attention may be worth adopting; but withal it is better to make these exercises