

a little too short than to weary the family by making them too long. Nothing will compensate for making the service distasteful to the younger members of the family. If the services be invariably short, there will be seldom occasions when they must be omitted on account of hurried circumstances. Good men will find more excuses for omitting a long service than a short one, and good children will find more excuses for being absent when such a service is being observed.

Another error which frequently frustrates the end of family worship is putting it off till too late. In the morning the family get scattered, in the evening get sleepy or go to bed. On the principle of not offering that to the Lord which is of no service to ourselves, we should if practicable call the family together early in the evening, that we may worship without weariness, and give the Lord of the best. A good man, with whom we have frequently sojourned for the night, used to talk or read or otherwise employ himself until one after another the younger members retired or fell asleep in their chairs, when the good lady yawned and every one was exhausted, the master of the house gave the solemn word, "*It is time to read.*" The sleepy family went through the drowsy service, each glad of the liberty to retire afforded them when the service was done. Was not this offering God the blind and the lame in sacrifice?

Notwithstanding all that can be urged in respect to the duty and advantage of family worship, some good men have lived in habitual neglect of it. Some have urged as an excuse, their want of ability; but surely it is possible for most men to read the word, or get some of the family to do so, then a few words humbly addressed to God would soon be followed by the ability to say more. Many who decline the service on this score have never given it a determined trial. Some are kept back by pride; they are unwilling to offer a few feeble petitions at first. If they could at once pray in the family, with the confidence, ease and fluency of those who have much experience in the work, they would begin the exercise; but they are unwilling to begin at the alphabet as it were, in the hearing of others. Such have a serious heart-work to perform, and should weigh the validity of these motives as in God's sight.

Some will urge that the duty is an optional one, and say that there is no command for it in God's word. We have already shown that the duty grows out of the relation of the family to the church, and is every way becoming and useful. It is moreover to be presumed that Abraham, who instructed his family so carefully in the way of the Lord, prayed with them. We cannot believe that Joshua, who resolved to serve the Lord for himself and his house, failed to join with them in supplication for grace to serve him. Did not David pray with his family, who returned to bless them after the excitements of the day on which he brought up the ark of God. Shall we say Job had not family worship, after being told that he sent and sanctified them after the days of their feasting, and arose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. Job did this continually, for he said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Who can believe that he had no family worship? If we have the example of good and holy men, why need we ask a direct command? Let any believer ask himself if the practice of family worship or its omission would be the more pleasing to God. How can a Christian bring up his family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, who never prays with them? "I will," says the Apostle, "that men pray *every where*, lifting up holy hands." He certainly does not except the family, and why