

**FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE
USED IN
FAMILIES, AS SET FORTH
IN THE PRAYER-BOOK**

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Forms of Prayer to be Used in Families, as Set Forth in the Prayer-book by Josiah Swett

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 TO BE
 USED IN FAMILIES,
 AS
 SET FORTH IN THE PRAYER-BOOK:
 TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME
 OCCASIONAL PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS,
 WITH
 HYMNS FOR FAMILY DEVOTION,
 CHIEFLY FROM THE SAME SOURCE.

Completed by the Rev. J. P. ...

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Almighty
God, the
fountain of
all wisdom,
who know-
est our ne-
cessities before we ask, and our ignorance
in asking; We beseech Thee to have com-
passion upon our infirmities; and those
things, which for our unworthiness we
dare not,
and for our
blindness
we cannot
ask, vouch-
safe to give
us, for the
worthiness
of Thy Son
Jesus Christ
our Lord.
A M E N

GOD FORBID
THAT I SHOULD GLORY
SAVE IN THE CROSS OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

E

Duty of Family Prayer.

A few observations, as introductory to this little Manual, on the subject above named, I hope may be well received, and not be found unworthy of regard.

The Family is of Divine institution, and constitutes the basis of every well organized community, and all good society. Around it cluster the affections, and all things connected with it are hallowed by the association. It is the nursery of virtue, and of every generous emotion and ennobling sentiment; and so much so, that where virtue and morality, and the principles of religion are not found in connection with it, we look in vain for them elsewhere. The most lasting and effective impressions in respect to another world, and our duties to God and man in this, it may safely be averred, are obtained by the child before he leaves the parental fireside, and at a very early age; far earlier, perhaps, than most are aware. The responsibilities of parents, therefore, are very great, and such as may make them tremble as they look soberly at them, in view of their own insufficiency and weakness, their want of wisdom, knowledge and strength. According to the influence they exert over their children, so may they expect their children to be, for this world and for the next. *They have them*

under their control, and can form their habits and characters much as they choose. It is in their power to educate them for an honorable and virtuous life, or to bring them up to dishonor and shame. Through God's blessing on their exertions, they may, during their tender and forming age, nurture them for Heaven, making them the servants of Christ, "sanctified and meet for the Master's use;" or they may, through indifference and supineness, and, especially, by the bad examples they set before them, cause them to neglect the great salvation provided in the Gospel, and so to perish forever.

What parent seeing this, and no one with the Bible in his hands can help seeing it, even if reason and conscience do not teach him as much, can fail to be most seriously affected with the nature and weight of the responsibilities resting upon him? What one is there, who has neglected his child's moral and religious training, that will not shudder at what may possibly be the future condition of that child? nay, at what certainly will be his condition before God, as he suffers him to grow up in ignorance of the truths of the Gospel, in habitual violation of the Lord's day, and in constant transgression of God's most righteous laws? And how shall he, who has refused, or neglected to educate his children for Heaven, as well as for a virtuous life here, answer it to his God? What account will he have to render of the matter? What reason can he assign, what apology offer to the great Searcher of hearts, why he did not fulfil the trust committed to him? why he suffered, or rather caused *those whom* he brought into the world, and for whom

Christ died, to perish? Will not their souls be required at his hands? Will he not be answerable for their ruin? And if so, what untold agonies must be his!

Now it is admitted that the right training of children is a most difficult task. No one is adequate to it who presents not in himself, in his daily walk and conversation, an example of what he would have *them* be—an example worthy their imitation; teaching them at the same time, as they are able to receive it, such moral and religious truth as is needful for them to know and practice. But all this even will avail nought without God's blessing on their endeavors. And for His blessing to be had, it must be sought, and sought by prayer. The parent, who would not fail in the right instruction and training of his children, must often frequent his closet, there to implore direction and assistance from on high. He must be an habitual attendant at the House of Prayer, taking his children with him as they become of suitable age, that he may honor God and obtain help of Him in His holy Sanctuary, and teach them to honor Him there also. And especially, as bearing directly on the good order of his Family and its christian nurture, must he gather his children around him, morning and evening, in Family devotion; praying with them and for them, and teaching them that, as the members of the same Church pray together, so should the members of the same Family.

Nothing so strikingly marks a christian household as Family Prayer. Nothing so strongly impresses children with the reality of religion. Nothing makes

them so much feel their constant, daily dependence on a sovereign God. And nothing, furthermore, so knits the hearts of all together, and unites the whole Family, as a Family, to Christ. Besides, no christian duty is so pleasant as this. What can be sweeter than for those, dear to each other as parents and children, husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters are, to bow down together before their merciful Father in Heaven, and make their supplications to Him, through the mediation of His dear Son, Who loved them and gave Himself for them? No more lovely spectacle is witnessed in this fallen world; and none has fonder remembrances, or more cherished associations.

And how, again, can one who is a parent, a father especially, neglect this duty, or treat it with disregard, when he knows the weight of his responsibility, and his need of Divine help? How can he leave his children in the morning, and go forth to the business of the day, without committing them to the protection of the Almighty, and asking the blessing of Heaven on his labors and efforts for their good? And how can he retire to his bed at night, when he knows not what its darkness may bring forth, before he has supplicated, on bended knees with them, Him Who never slumbers nor sleeps, to watch over and keep them, and his whole household in safety; rendering unto Him, at the same time, hearty thanks for the mercies and blessings of the day past? Many parents, many *christian* parents, it is sad to say, do this; never praying in their families from one year to another; never, perhaps, in their whole lives! But

how perilous a course is this! how unwise! how self-dependent, not to say self-willed! how ungrateful! how presumptuous! What blessings does it not deprive them of? What comforts does it not withhold from them? How can they expect, as they pursue it, God's blessing on their Families, of which they stand in so much need? How can they hope that their children will be even as religious as themselves? Facts prove, painfully prove, that the neglect of Family Prayer, with the consequent lack of its necessary attendants and blessings, is a sure way to make religion lightly thought of on the part of the younger members of the household, (if not the older also,) and to encourage in them an irreverence for, and an inattention to, the all-important subject of the soul's salvation.

Wherefore permit me, you who are parents, or heads of families, as you value your own happiness, the happiness of your households, and especially the eternal well-being of those dearer to you than life; permit me to urge upon you the setting up of the Family Altar, if it be not already erected; or, if it be, to entreat that you will never allow it to be taken down. Gather your families about you every morning and every evening, as the Church teaches, and your duty and interest enjoin, and pray and praise and give thanks together. You shall find joy and comfort and sweetness and assurance as you go on in the practice of this holy duty, and the end will be crowned with the richest blessings.

As a means of encouraging you to perform this reasonable and delightful service, commended by