# The practice of family religion

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev J.J.Murray

[0:00] And that's a very practical subject indeed. Family religion in our day is on the decline. I'm sure you would agree with me when I say that. And what we need and what the church as a whole needs is not only to be aware that we have a responsibility to practice family religion, but we also need guidance and direction as to how to go about that.

And the practice of family religion suggests to me that John will be dealing tonight not only with the theological pieces of this, but also with the how to.
And we all, I'm sure, confess that we need help in this area and that we have failed in this area in the past. There's no need for me to introduce the speaker to you, John J. Murray.
And I have read some articles that John has written in the banner. He wrote an article on catechizing children some years ago in the banner, which I read for much profit.
And so he has been dealing with this subject at various times in the past. And it's appropriate that he should be chosen to give this paper this evening. He may not agree, but I think so anyway.
[1:20] And without anything further, I'll call on him now to give his paper. Right, John. If we listen, we'll grab attention. Now, having to follow Dornath and Brora in the proceedings of this day is a daunting task for me.

I remember the first time I spoke at a school of theology. Professor Finlayson, in his report on the monthly record, referred to my address being delivered at the speed of an express train.
So I think I've learned to slow down a little, and perhaps I'll take an example from the speed of the train between Glasgow and Oban tonight. I've got 12 A4 pages here, so if you'd like to keep awake, count them as they're being turned over.
This address was prepared without any conscious thought of the subject of the paper given by our friend David this afternoon.
And we're dealing in the main with two different aspects of children's work. And the work that David was speaking about is more necessary now, because I believe the failure in the area that I am speaking about, we may clash at one or two points, but I hope not too many.
[2:39] And a good chairman spoke about the how of doing it. I'm afraid I'm not hearing too much about that this evening, but I'm dealing with the biblical basis and the need for it in the situation today.

Well, as I seek to deal with this subject, I am conscious that the very term, family religion, has a rather unfamiliar ring to it. You need not be surprised that the younger generation may not know what is meant by it.
Our young people have grown up in an age when the family has been under a sustained attack. We have gone from the extended family to the nuclear family, and now to the single-parent family.
It is claimed that only a diminishing minority now live in a traditional or nuclear family. Single-parent families increased by 71% in the years 1971 to 1981.
One children in seven grows up in a one-parent family. We are not in any doubt that the assault on the family was launched from hell. The devil knows what he is about.
[3:47] In his epistle to the reader of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Thomas Martin claims, Religion was first hatched in families, and there the devil seeks to crush it. If he can subvert families, other societies and communities will not long flourish and subsist with any power and vigor.

It would be interesting to trace all the agencies used by the devil to subvert the family in recent times. One or two examples will give an indication. A document which is alleged to have come into the hands of the field director of the American Security Council in the 1960s, showed how the communists hoped to achieve their objectives in Western civilization without resort to arms.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Entitled Revolution by Stel, The document advocated, Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures and TV.
Discredit the family as an institution. Encourage promiscuity and easy divorce. As far back as 1967 in this country, Dr. Edmund Leach in his BBC Reef lectures claimed, Far from being the basis of the good society, the family with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets is the source of all our discontents.
We went on to argue that we needed a change in the values that make us revere the family. Twenty years on, we are left in no doubt that that change has taken place.
[5:16] Well-organized and highly vocal lobbies have had an influence out of all proportion to their size. Successive governments have seemed far more ready to listen to the humanists and the feminists and what have you than to the Christian church.

The recognition of these ideologies have brought the state itself to be against the family. The elimination of laws against pornography, obscenity and perversion strikes at the very basis of the family.
The current tax and welfare system is stacked against the normal family and favours unmarried motherhood, cohabitation and even the breakup of families. The proliferation of experts, social workers, advisors who claim that they know better than parents and seek to usurp their role is adding to the pressure on the family.
Even our educational system is contributing to this. The implication of the theory of evolution is that marriage is a social convenience. Sex education can be given without a moral framework.
The subversion of the family is threatening the very fabric of our society. Broken homes, severed relationships, single-parent families, latchkey children are factors in the development of personality problems in the rising generation that works itself out in indiscipline, vandalism, mugging, hooliganism, violence, perversion and so on.
[6:36] The disease is deep. The malady is widespread. The corruption has permeated so many avenues of life. The power of godliness is scarcely felt. The fear of God is almost non-existent.

We might be tempted to say with a psalmist, if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? How can the situation be changed? How can we escape the judgment of God?
Some would say that the answer lies in mass evangelism. You wonder if sometimes it does more harm than good. Others would say the answer lies in a charismatic renewal. In spite of its claims to success, the charismatic movement seems to have made no influence on the morals of our nation. Still others would say that the answer lies in revival. Well, they are nearer to the answer. What we do need is a revival on the scale and manner of the Protestant Reformation.
A revival and reformation that will make its impact felt in the families of our land. If it does not reach them, it will not be lasting. I believe that our reformers and Puritan forefathers had the insight to see that if a permanent change was to be effected in the land, it must be done through the family.
[7:49] Keep up the government of God in your families, says Richard Baxter. Holy families must be the chief preservers of the interests of religion in the world. An earlier Puritan Richard Greenham said, If ever we would have the Church of God to continue among us, we must bring it into our households and nourish it in our families.

Then Philip Henry, father of the commentator, who set such an example in family life, declared, The power of religion will be seen in family life. It is not so much what we are at Church as what we are in our families.
Religion and the power of it will be family religion. Well, in seeking to support the thesis that the practice of family religion is the best means of establishing and preserving Christianity in the Church and in the State, we will consider five things.
First of all, the basis for the practice. Then secondly, the implications arising from that basis. And thirdly, the benefits associated with the practice.
Four, the confirmation of this from history. And five, the application to our own situation. First then, the basis for the practice.
[9:00] And there are two main considerations for this. The first one is, the family is the basic unit of society. And this needs to be asserted in an age when stress is laid upon the place and rights of the individual.

God makes the solitary to dwell in families. After he created Adam, he said, It is not good that man should be alone. He formed Eve to be a helpmeet for Adam.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

She was brought to Adam, and the two became one flesh. Out of the most intimate union upon earth was to come the family. Marriage is a very seed plot, the breeding place, the nursery of all society.
Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it was the command given, and was to be undertaken within the structure of the family. The family is a creation ordinance.
It's a divine institution for all mankind. It exists by divine command, and is not a social convenience or a convention. It's the original society.
[10:03] To try and discredit or eliminate it, is to fight against God and his appointed order. Even in its original form, it had a God-given structure.

Man was given the primary role in government before Eve was created, and he represented God in headship in creation. That's the family as a basic unit of society.
But then secondly, the family is taken up into God's purposes of grace. After the fall of man, when God came to establish his covenant of grace, he did so within the family.
He chose Abram and his family. I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.
In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The marriage institution, as Professor John Murray, is sanctified by the forces of redemptive grace, to such an extent that it is made one of the main channels for the accomplishment of God's saving purpose in the world.
[11:09] It is in the bosom of the Christian family that the nurture which the Lord himself provides is administered. Believing parents are simply the instruments of the nurture which the Lord exercises.

The children of believing parents, or of one believing parent, are in the covenant. They belong to God in the first instance. He is saying in effect to us, Take this child and nurse it for me.
In baptism, the stamp of God's property is put on a child in a public way. The child is a member of the visible church, but it is a family, not the church, that produces and nurtures the holy seed of the covenant.
The parents, and more especially the father, not the church, are in the place of God to the child. It was the pattern in the Old Testament, and when we come to the New Testament, we find that it is fathers who are exhorted to bring up their children in a nurture and admonition of the Lord.
This is the main way through which God builds up his church. Then secondly, the implications arising from this basis. Well, there are several implications which arise from the divine ordering of the family.
[12:20] And the first of them is the worship of God. The first implication of this is that because the family is ordained of God as a unit, and responsible to God as a unit, it must engage in the worship of God.

Man's primary obligation is to worship God. The family's first obligation is to worship God. Family worship is the joint worship rendered to God by all members of the household.
The family will worship something or somebody together, as can be so plainly seen in our society today. That is clearly wrong, and families will be judged for it.
Families can be no more neutral than can nations. We speak of the nation's right to worship God, and so there's the right of the family to worship God.
And it's interesting to think of the order of the words in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 21, and religious worship on the Sabbath day. God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth, as in private families daily, and in secret, each one by himself.
[13:26] Modern evangelicalism has tended to reverse the order and to exalt the so-called quiet time to the detriment of family worship. The first corporate worship of God was in the family.

The reference to coats of skin, to cloth Adam and Eve, may point to the setting up of worship in the home. Noah built an altar in his family after the deliverance. Abraham commanded his children in his household.
Job offered burnt offerings for his family. David returned to bless his household. Jeremiah in his prayer cried, Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name.
And it's difficult to conceive how we can fulfill our obligations to one another within the home and nurture the holy seed without the practice of family worship.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

What on whom we worship determines our behavior. As our religious worship, so will be our ethics. The true fear of God will manifest itself first in the worship of God.
[14:29] The child's first acquaintance with so much in life is in the home. If worship is not there in the early formative years, is it any wonder that he or she may rebel against their introduction to it at a later stage.

We cannot hope to instill the true fear of God into our children unless the atmosphere of worship is in the home. Family worship is a guard against hypocrisy in ourselves.
Whatever we are in public life, we are no more before God than what we are in our family. But family worship is not a substitute for public worship. The one is a training ground for the other.
The parents who encourage family worship are the ones who are going to find it easier to integrate the children into public worship. There was always a close association in the best days of the church in England and Scotland between the practice of family worship, the right use of the Lord's Day, and attendance upon the public means of grace.
Then the second implication concerns partners in marriage. The second implication arising from God-ordained family life is the importance of the relationship between husband and wife.
[15:40] Although both were created in the image of God and are equal in his eyes, they have been given different roles to play. Man is the glory of God in his headship and government.

He is the head of the wife and the head of the family. To practice true family religion, he must assume his God-given position. He must take responsible initiative.
He is the representative and organ of the love in which the conjugal relationship has its ground. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.
The wife also must assume her God-given role. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord. The wife's relationship to her husband parallels the church's relationship to Christ. She is subject to him. As they find their God-given roles, they contribute to one another's sanctification and are prepared for their responsibilities as parents.
[16:40] Follow the maker's instructions as the way to a happy home life. The wife in her subjection finds her true dignity in pleasing her husband and reading her children.

She gives them an example of submission and reverence. That is all important for their upbringing. In spite of what the feminists may say, we maintain a high calling of motherhood.
John Blanchard summed it up nicely. This relationship in the home. A family with no head is a disaster. One with two is a monstrosity.
Three, the parent-child relationship. The third implication for the practice of family religion is the relationship between the parents and the children. Nature itself teaches parents that they must love, care, protect, and provide for their offspring.
For many parents, all that means is caring for the physical and intellectual welfare of their children. But there is one duty and responsibility that stands out above all others, and that is teaching them the fear of the Lord.
[17:47] Come, ye children, hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, the beginning of wisdom. The great duty and responsibility of parents is to train their children.

Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Now this training is not, as the many think, to the end that the child may make up its own mind.
The training is purposive. Abraham was commended by God. I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.
Joshua said, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. He wasn't leaving them any option.
The words of God to Israel in Deuteronomy 6, Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and the end of all this is, that they may fear the Lord and not go after other gods.
When we turn to the New Testament, we find the same thing. As we mentioned already, fathers are commanded to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Nurture entails discipline, including the rod of correction to drive out rebellion.
[18:59] Admonition speaks of the verbal presentation of right views of God, including the idea of catechizing. One of the greatest means of grace in the life of a child, says Al Martin, is the biblical implementation of discipline.

The complementary duty to that of the parent is the obedience of the children. Standing at the very head of the second table of the law is the command, honour thy father and mother. Paul could say,

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
That is where practice begins. That is where ethics start. The earliest conscious reactions must be reverence for and obedience to the parent. The parent is in the place of God.
The parent has the authority of God. It is an authority tempered by affection. The child is in a state of dependence. The earlier the process begins, the better. Sin and rebellion must be counteracted at the earliest stage.
The child must see that what is required of him or her is for their good. The obedience will then become a willing and a loving obedience.
[20:09] That's the implications from the basis. Now we turn to the benefits of the practice of family religion. And the first one is this, the good to the state and society.

The family is the instrument of government in any land. B.P. Palmer works out this in some detail in his book, The Family and Its Civil and Church Aspects.
He says, The family is the normal school in which subjection to the law is first taught. Apart from other difficulties, it is perfectly clear that no government could be framed strong enough to subdue and control a thousand imperious wills.
We must invent the family if we did not already have it. Palmer extols God's wisdom in the arrangement, especially in the minuteness of the subdivision, The whole race is broken up into small sections in which for a long season and during the plastic period of youth, a few wills are put under supreme subjection and the principle of obedience is woven into the character and being of the child.
The family is the most potent welfare agency, educational institution and government disciplinarian in society. Destroy it and you multiply your problems.
[21:31] The chaos of our society today is eloquent testimony to that. The disobedience, insubordination, lack of respect, irreverence, hooliganism, vandalism, violence are the bitter harvest of departure from God's way.

Dispensing with fathers leads not to a less violent but to a more violent society. There is something pathetic someone has said recently and perverse about the demand for rape crisis centres, security boats and self-defence classes from those doing their very best to promote the social conditions which necessitate such services.
The proper time to begin disarming the teenage time bomb is 12 years before it comes. The cure of crime, once remarked, J. Edgar Hoover, is not the electric chair but the high chair.
And the second benefit is the increase of the church. It is as a result of the practice of family religion that the church has her greatest increase.
This we believe is the purpose of God in his covenant dealing with his people. The promise is unto you and to your children. Allowing for the sovereignty of God and his electing purposes, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated, we should normally expect that the seed of believers will walk in the ways of the Lord.
[22:52] The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

Your sons will take the place of your fathers. The third benefit is the strength and stability of the church. Someone has said you can have strong families without a strong church but you cannot have a strong church without strong families.
And some of these benefits are that you have well instructed knowledgeable members coming to the church. I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians of England said John Wesley.
Perhaps you should have tried the theologians of Scotland or of Ireland. But that sentiment could be re-echoed from many a heart perhaps even here tonight the influence of mothers on ministers on sons brought up in families and we must see what a great benefit that has been to the church of Jesus Christ.
And then the second thing is problems have can be dealt with at their source at their source. The outcrop of problems and the growth of counselling in the church today is a symptom of the decline of the family and more especially of the extended family.
[24:18] And thirdly you have leaders for the church. Men who take on their God-given role of headship in the home are the men fit for office in the church. The exercise of gifts in family worship helped many a father and son to use these gifts in public.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Then the fourth thing is the confirmation from church history. Now this could make a study in itself. It would be interesting to show some history that where Christianity took the firmest hold upon communities and nations it was through the practice of family religion.
I came across a study along these lines by Dr. John MacLeod Principal of the Free Church College and author of Scottish Theology. It's a paper he gave at the Fourth Calvinistic Congress in Edinburgh in 1938 entitled The Reformed Faith and Its Ethical Consequences in the Family and it's published in this book The Proceedings of the Calvinistic Congress Edinburgh in 1938.
If you haven't seen it you could have a look at it afterwards. And Principal MacLeod is extolling the virtues of the reformer's view that the visible church includes the children of believers and the subsequent application of this to the family the due recognition of the household as an integral unit in the Christian Commonwealth.
This is what he says For the fruit borne by the application of the reformed presentation of Christian truth to the domestic institute we may look to the records of those regions and eras when the application was most faithfully made.
[25:55] If to the eyes of our Scottish reformer Geneva was in Calvin's day the most perfect school of Christ that was to be seen anywhere one as only to turn to the moral and spiritual elevation of the godly homes of Huguenot France of the confessing Netherlands of Protestant and Puritan England and New England and of this covenanting country to see what a benign and blessed what an educated and elevating and an evangelizing influence this application put forth in the communities that came under its sway.

The conviction that the reformers and their successors had about the vital importance of the practice of family religion can be seen in the earnestness with which they apply themselves to compiling confessions of faith and catechisms this can be seen in Luther's Germany Calvin's Geneva Puritan England and the covenanting and covenanting Scotland.
These documents were for the church but more particularly for family instruction and you're not surprised to find in the prelims as we call them to these books to the Christian reader especially heads of families and the one for the Westminster Confession of Faith is worth reading and also Thomas Manton's epistle to the reader in which he says a family is the seminary of church and state and if children be not well principled there all miscarrieth a fault in the first concoction is not many than the second if youth be bred ill in the family they prove ill in church and commonwealth family instruction was encouraged catechizing became a regular feature of church and family life family worship was made a plain duty the general assembly of the church of the Scottish church even before approving the Westminster Confession of Faith drew up and approved a directory for family worship and the act approving it makes persistent neglect of family worship a matter of suspension from the Lord's Supper
I hope you will take time to look at that directory of family worship in the Westminster Confession of Faith and it may interest you to know it's been reprinted recently by folk in America and it's available but this is what the act says it says and to some through the usual neglect of the very substance of the duty of family worship diligence search and inquiry sorry the assembly does further require and appoint ministers and ruling elders to make diligence search and inquiry in the congregations to committee to their charge respectively whether there be among them any family or families which use to neglect this necessary duty and if any such family be found the head of the family is to be first admonished privately to amend his fault and in case of his continuing with her in he is to be gravely and sadly reproved by the session after which reproved if he be found still to neglect family worship let him be for his obstinacy in such an offence suspended and debarred from the Lord's Supper as being justly esteemed and worthy to communicate her in till he amends as far as I know that act is still enforced so you can begin putting into force in your congregations when you go back apart from Scotland there was no place that the reformed concept of the family was more fully developed and more vigorously applied than in Puritan England to the Puritan the family was a little church even a kind of paradise on earth in which the husband was by divine arrangement the head and priest we quoted
Greenham Baxter and Henry at the beginning of the paper they were all imbued with the idea that a transformation could be brought about through the practice of family religion Greenham had the ideal of the fathers of families performing their work and joining hands with the magistrate and minister to see the way of godliness spread over the whole land Richard Baxter's success at Kidderminster is well known when I came thither first there was about one family in the side of a

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

street that worshipped God and called on his name and when I came away there were some streets where there was not past one family in the side of a street that did not so and that by professing serious godliness gave hope of their sincerity if that could be done then why can't it be done today and what could we say about Philip Henry that home in Broad Oak must have been a home as near to perfection as any home upon earth the Puritan family lived served and worshipped and glorified God in the church in the state and in the creation at large such a high view of the family was the bedrock of the Puritan social reformation while the reformation had recovered the importance of the family the Puritans restored it to its proper place in the social order neglect of family duties soon became for the Puritans the marks of an unregenerate life to return briefly to Dr. John MacLeod he observes how in contrast to the reformers and Puritans the independent brethren of the Commonwealth in England omitted from their definition of the Christian church any recognition of the children or households of believers they stressed the idea of spiritual individualism which underlay the pure communion which they as independents sought to secure
[31:35] Prince of Malone Cloud claimed that this achieved the disintegration of Puritism in England in the 17th century all we can say is that the independent or Baptist principle on these matters did gradually erode the Puritan concept of the family and led to the impoverishment of church and state in England I came across the other day the testimony of a Baptist minister well known to me and some of you on this question of family worship and this is what he had to say I have come from a very conservative background I never knew true family worship so I lived in a godly home this was not an isolated case there are many churches particularly in this area many strict Baptist churches very conservative churches where there be virtually no instruction of the children my mother was a most godly woman and she taught me to say my prayers she might have said a word at night but not my father he used to read a chapter and would pray but nothing more in a sense this is new to me and my own children of course have grown up many of these people have virtually been taught that it was quite wrong to allow children to take any part in prayer at all and that is the outcome of that view

I believe as it was manifested in England now we come to the application I think I have five points of application to our own situation today and the first is we need a reaffirmation of faith in the God appointed way of the family producing the holy seed of the church we need a reaffirmation of faith in the God appointed way of the family producing the holy seed of the church I was brought up in circles where the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was elevated to the heights and the sacrament of baptism was a thing done in a corner if a certain gentleman known to most of us feels that he has a calling to restore the Lord's Supper to his rightful place in the free church then I feel I have a calling to restore baptism to a meaningful place there was a bachelor who finally confirmed in my thinking something I have been battling towards over many years I acknowledge my debt to the Reverend William Still and in particular to his sermon bringing up children in faith not fear preached in Gilcomston on 26 May 1968 already referred to by David today even believing parents or some of them don't stand up upon the truth of the covenant the reason why the doctrine of infant baptism is so much maligned in evangelical circles is that it has not been believed it has not been lived out if we believed it and lived it out people would be obliged to see that it does work where there is real faith and real works of faith that every Christian parent here believe that it works because it is according to God's covenant he goes on
I have said this before too many Christian parents bring up their children in fear lest they will go astray rather than faith that they will not but will take the right way that fear expressed in the course of their first few years in a thousand ways soon communicates itself to their sensitive souls and they become like you preoccupied with thoughts of going astray just like the horrible drawing power of a precipice the likeliest thing in the world is that children brought up in a home where it is feared they will go astray will go astray they are predisposed and preconditioned to that possibility for fear comes from Satan and by fearing for you ought to trust and quietly implement that trust by the works of faith you are bringing Satan into your home whenever fear tends to grip you as it may Satan is always up to his tricks turn at once to God and away from Satan and say God you have said and you have commanded me to say back to you what you have said to me that these children are yours
I will not fear but will believe and act accordingly and much more to that effect in that sermon I mentioned Philip Henry he provides us with an excellent example in the practice of family religion he drew up a short form of the baptismal covenant for the use of his children each one of them

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

repeated it every large day he persuaded them to consent to it and when they grew up he made them all write it out and set their names to it there's a photocopy of it there if you'd like to see it afterwards in dealing with his children about their spiritual state he took hold of them very much of them very much by the handle of their infant baptism and frequently inculcated that upon them that they were born in God's house and would be times dedicated and given up to him and therefore were obliged to be servants on this topic he generally argued and he would often say if infant baptism were more improved it would be less disputed then secondly we need a reassertion of the priority of the example and teaching of the home in the upbringing of children the home is the centre of Christian nurture for the child not the church the father has the responsibility for the teaching and nurture of his children not the Sunday school or the day school he must set up the worship of God in his home he must take on his God given responsibility he must order his household so that the Lord's day is the queen of days and the family go together to the house of God and sit under the word preached together when John 1 was speaking this morning about remembering the Lord's day I recall a sermon that Ian Murray preached on the ten commandments on the fourth commandment and where he took the view or he put forward this view to remember the Sabbath day in one way was to remember it during the other six days of the week so that you were prepared in every way for that day which is the queen of days and everything in your household should be geared and all your work should be geared to leading up to the Lord's day if there is a Sabbath school it must not interfere with the family sitting together under the word in the church I could not agree more with David Robertson about the need for us to address children in our sermons we must acknowledge that they are there I tend more and more to go against children's addresses myself and those of you who read the Banner of Truth will have seen an excellent article recently by Geoffrey Thomas on handicapped children and there he summarises the objections to children's toll in the church that's worth considering but the way we've been running our churches has meant that we've been losing our children in their early teens again this is something that Mr. Still has much to teach us about and you can read about that in the 38 years at Kilcomsten how he finished the practice of having the Sunday school and the children going out to Sunday school and the children sat under the ministry of the word and that made a great difference in his congregation the attitude of so much of church life today tends to the breakup of the family as Paul Helm says since parents have their first responsibility for the children it seems wrong-headed to detach children from their parents even so superficially there seems to be gain from doing this church activities must not militant against the practice of family religion our churches must be churches of families we must resist the temptation to split it into groups and then a third thing by way of application we need to be reassured that family work is Christian work bringing up a family is a divine calling man's first calling was to be a husband although some might say it was a gardener a wife's primary calling is to be a helpmeet to her husband and a mother to her children there's a tremendous dignity attached to fatherhood and motherhood

[40:06] I'm only a housewife it's a self-denigration that should not be heard in our midst motherhood to quote Walter Chantry is the highest calling any woman can enter there is no more pitiful person in the world than a woman who has it all together in business and whose family has fallen apart we have to watch this as far as church work is concerned some of the worst behaved children are those whose parents are busiest in church work to say that we are so busy in the Lord's work that we do not have time for the family is to bring a false dichotomy into that work to live a family life in fulfilment of the scripture amounts to a practical demonstration of the gospel and presents a more powerful witness to the world than any other church activity godly family should be our evangelising agency especially in this day when it is such a rare thing fourthly we need to be reminded that the family is the proving ground for our Christianity and our church life it is the mark of the hypocrite says McChain to be a Christian everywhere except at home to quote Philip Henry again it is not so much what we are at church as what we are in our families in the same vein

Vance Havner writes the real test of your Christianity is not how pious you may look at the Lord's table on Sunday but how you act at the breakfast table at home religion is not real if it is not brought into the home the instructions in the pastoral epistles can only be understood against the background of family religion elders and deacons are to prove themselves first as husbands and fathers they must have already exercised godly competent authority what do you do about a preacher who has failed to rule his family well what do you do about a gifted wife who does not acknowledge male headship spiritual privileges are not to overturn natural relationships it is

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

inappropriate for a woman to exercise authority over a man in the church as it is in the family practical family practice family religion and so many of the problems plaguing our churches today would be solved and the fifth thing is this we need to seize this golden opportunity of the breakdown in our society to do all in our power to restore the family society cannot survive without the family we must prove and demonstrate that fact we must resist and combat the deluge of propaganda against the family we need to arouse the conscience and minds of those who have been carried along with the tide of current philosophy now is the time for bold speaking now is the time to resist the tide we have the future of the church and the state to consider we need the foresight and the courage of our reforming fathers and I'll quote with some words from Professor Macleod
Principal Macleod in this same article the sedulous care that our reforming fathers called for in the oversight of the young shows how their eye with statement statement like precision was directed to the future they were not content with the past whose record was closed nor was it present with its limited measure of success they looked forward to the days that were yet to be for the full answer to the prayer that the Lord has taught his disciples to offer that the kingdom of God may come with its coming the face of the world will be changed and a godless and selfish and unbelieving world needs if it is to be set right that it should be turned upside down the natural institution of the family taken up and blessed in the kingdom of God will be the mighty instrument for achieving this end applause applause applause

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host