

# "MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY"

## Let's Have a Family Altar

By E. T. Barram

B-r-r-r-r. The phone was ringing, and we were in the midst of family prayers. Mother quietly arose from her knees and tip-toed to answer it. It was for me, but Mother said that I was busy and asked if the person could call later. How well I recall that when my buddy did call again he asked why I could not answer the phone, and I was ashamed to tell him. What a rebuke it has been down through the years to realize that I was ashamed of my Lord!

Indelibly written on my impressionable child mind were the memories of these evening-by-evening prayer sessions. After supper my dear old saintly Dad would take down the Bible and read a passage himself or pass the Bible on to Mother or one of us to read, and then we would all kneel to pray.

At first it was our parents and six children, then five, then four, then two. Now we are all away but that rendezvous with God still takes place. I know that every night Mother and Dad take us all before the Throne of Grace, asking that the Lord will have His way in our lives.

Today four of us boys, including the one who came to live with us, are in the Gospel ministry, proclaiming the riches of God's grace. The other two boys are actively engaged in Christian work, and my only sister is a living testimony to His saving power. Thus all of us are serving the Lord. Recently I visited the homes of my brothers, and each one has a family altar. Children in those homes openly confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and take part in audible prayer. Was the family altar in our home worth while?

In these days modern Christian parents wish for their children a godly heritage and a life of Christian service. With that in mind they take them to Sunday school, bring them up in the church and prepare them to go to a Christian college. All of these institutions are commendable, but I believe the great and primary institution is the Home. The first Bible training should center around the Family Altar.

Each day the children should be brought into the presence of God by their parents. During the early, impressionable years the Family Altar should become a part of the children's daily lives. Let the little minds understand that Father and Mother have faith in a God who cares for even the small things in our lives.

Today young people are asking us how such a great God could care for them. That never troubled me. I learned in my childhood that God was concerned for our family, interested in the cattle on our farm and the sick horse in the stable; and still He yearned over the soul of our unsaved neighbor. Parents, teach your children by way of the Family Altar. We read, "Bring the child up in the Sunday school and he will not be brought up in the law courts." I maintain that Christian parents should go one step beyond this and bring that child up around the Family Altar.

Dad, Mother, if you have not had family prayer and Bible reading, let the word of one who owes his Christian heritage to that institution speak to your heart. Let my experience remind you that you owe it to your children. But even greater than that responsibility is your obligation to God, who said:

"These words . . . thou shalt teach . . . diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

Today there are many helps published to encourage the maintenance of the Family Altar. Secure a daily devotional magazine or book of daily readings . . . set aside a time each day for prayer and the reading of God's Word with whoever is at your home. You'll be blessed . . . God will be honored. Let's have a family altar!—The Evangelical Friend.

### TAKE TIME TO PRAY

The world looks out of weary eyes.

The burdens crush, the cares perplex.

The sun shines out of somber skies,

The hopes of many lie in wrecks.

How can we help the world today?

Take time to pray. Take time to pray.

Look o'er the world and see the need.

Look out on suffering everywhere.

God waits for saints to intercede;

God's work awaits our earnest prayer.

And shall we fail our God today?

Take time to pray. Take time to pray.

When stoutest hearts are filled with dread,

When want and suffering are so great,

When children die for lack of bread,

When all the world seems full of hate—

God help us! Can we turn away?

Take time to pray. Take time to pray.

—Jennie E. Shepardson

### WE MUST PRAY MORE . . . .

A young man had been called to the foreign field. He had not been in the habit of preaching, but he knew one thing—how to prevail with God. Going to a friend one day, he said, "I don't see how God could use me on the field; I have no special talent."

His friend said, "My brother, God needs men on the field who can pray. There are too many preachers, and too few pray-ers."

The young man went to the foreign field. In his room in the early dawn a voice was heard weeping and pleading for souls. All through the day, the closed door and the hush that prevailed made one feel like walking softly, for a soul was wrestling with God!

To his mission home hungry souls would flock, drawn by an irresistible power. In the morning hours some would call and say: "I have gone by your house so many times, and have longed to come in. Will you tell me how I can be saved?" Or from some distant place another would call, saying, "I heard you would tell us here how we might find heart-rest."

Ah, the mystery was unlocked! In the secret chamber lost souls were prayed for and

## The Normalcy of Prayer

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We have long felt that prayer, more specifically concerned prayer, should be one of the most natural things in human lives. Sometimes, and I fear many times, that is far from factual.

We may have to remember that to bring recalcitrant members of a family into line for prayer will involve tensivity and personality clashes. This condition sometimes exists when and where outside un-Christian sentiments have imbued unsaved sons and daughters. These ungodly attitudes work a distinct hardship in homes.

I shall not attempt to say what parents can or may do in those instances. The statement made by one father to his son was, "As long as you are in my home, and a minor, you must come with us to family prayers." This caused friction and tensivity. I have no doubt that it would have been much easier for that father to have allowed that son to go his way. But duty called him to bring his house into subjection.

Happy is that household, however, where all who have crossed the line of accountability know the Lord and love the hour of prayer. To them all, prayer together is normal. It is just natural to have family prayer.

We visited in just that type of a home a short time ago. What sweet fellowship we had together talking of those things which interested us all! When the time came for family prayer, they did not wait for the visiting minister to ask to pray. One of the family came with the Bible and invited us to conduct family worship. We gladly acquiesced. After the reading, we knelt and prayed around, the daughter joining in. The spirit of prayer in that home was free and natural. Prayer together was the normal thing.

I do not say that all the members of a Christian home should always pray at the family altar. But the readers of this article will bear with me witness that it is a splendid and wholesome practice.

The burden of our souls is this: We need that freedom and naturalness of prayer together. If prayer is a dry, dead affair, no wonder the young despise it. But life in prayer is intriguing! Thank God for the sweetness of that time. Thank God for homes where prayer is wont to be made; and thank Him for those times when "God comes down the souls to greet, and glory crowns the mercy seat."

claimed. Th Holy Ghost knew just where they were, and sent them along.

Mark this: If all who read these lines would thus lay hold upon God, with the holy violence and unconquerable perseverance of faith-filled prayer, a good many things would give way, against which we have been beating with our puny human wisdom and power in vain.

The power of prayer has never been tried to its full capacity in any church. If we want to see mighty wonders of divine grace and power wrought, in place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let the entire Church answer God's challenge: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."—J. Hudson Taylor.