

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*God's Requirements*  
Micah 6:1-16

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #...). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

**Gathering Time Leader:** Prepare a copy of Micah 6:8 for each participant. You may make copies from the copy given at the end of the Worship Time.

**Bible Study Leader:**

**Worship Time Leader:**

Find and bookmark your Bible now at Psalms 103:1-5. You will read that passage as the benediction and blessing on your church at the end of the service. It should be a smooth and worshipful conclusion to your Sharing Time message—so it is important to have it ready to read when the moment arrives.

### **Music Sources:**

**Speak, O Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 432; CCLI #4615235

**Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 534; CCLI # 390  
Public Domain

**Yes, Lord, Yes**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 445; CCLI # 12224

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***God's Requirements***

### **Focal Text**

Micah 6:1-16

### **Background Text**

Micah 6

### **Main Idea**

Because of God's grace extended towards us, we should be faithful to him by living lives that please him.

### **Question to Explore**

What does God require of his people?

### **Teaching Aim**

The church will evaluate their own personal lives regarding their faithfulness to God. They will live lives that demonstrate justice and kindness towards others.

### **Gathering together:**

Sing:

**Speak, O Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal*, # 432; CCLI #4615235

### **First thoughts:**

The scripture we will consider today, Micah 6, contains one of the most beautiful and profound verses in all of the Bible. ***He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.***

**The Message** interprets it this way ***But he already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbour, be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don't take yourself too seriously – take God seriously.***

The words to the hymn “**Speak, O Lord**” call us to commit our lives to our Saviour this day:

“Speak, O Lord, as we come to You to receive the food of Your Holy Word.

Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;

Shape and fashion us in Your likeness that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O lord, and fulfill in us all Your purposes for Your glory.”

Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, 2006, Thankyou Music.

Take a few minutes to memorize Micah 6:8 verse and then share it with whoever is sitting next to you. As **The Message** states ***He has already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women.***

The people to whom Micah is speaking had failed to live up to these admonitions. They knew them or should have known them for they were the values passed on from generation to generation since the time of Moses. Determine to let this verse guide your actions this week.

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *God's Requirements*

#### **Focal Text**

Micah 6:1-16

#### **Background Text**

Micah 6

#### **Main Idea**

Because of God's grace extended towards us, we should be faithful to him by living lives that please him.

#### **Question to Explore**

What does God require of his people?

#### **Teaching Aim**

The church will evaluate their own personal lives regarding their faithfulness to God. They will live lives that demonstrate justice and kindness towards others.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

People in the ancient world who were not Israelites had a two-fold dilemma in terms of their religion. First, they had to figure out the right "god" to worship, usually determined by what they desired to happen. For instance they would worship a fertility god/goddess to bring fertile crops, flocks, and families; they would worship a war god/goddess for victory in battle; and a local god for protection. Different gods served different purposes. The second problem to figure out what each particular god or goddess required. The gods many times were capricious, changing their minds and moods without warning. An offering acceptable yesterday may not be acceptable today. Most of the times these "requirements" were not written down. The people had to consult the gods through one of their prophets, a diviner, a medium, or some other means.

The Israelites never had either one of these problems. First of all, they had *only one God*, Yahweh, who was the creator and lord of the entire universe and every aspect of their lives. Second, the Israelites never had to wonder what Yahweh required, because his requirements were laid down clearly through Moses at Mount Sinai, written down for all to see, and constantly referred to by the prophets. No one could plead ignorance of what Yahweh required. Because of God's grace extended towards them throughout their lives, his people should respond accordingly by living lives that please God. This raises a question, "What *does* God require of his people?"

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the "**Introduction**" article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

In this chapter Micah uses a common form of prophecy to bring the people to conviction of their sin, the "covenant lawsuit." In a covenant lawsuit God acts as the judge, the prophet is the prosecuting attorney, and the people are the plaintiffs. The intent is to display without a shadow of a doubt the sinfulness of the audience and the rightfulness of God's indictment and verdict against them. The intent was that the people would feel conviction over their sins and repent, seeking God's mercy instead. Micah first announced God's case against the people (vv. 1-2), rehearsed God's gracious actions towards them in the past (vv. 3-5), heard a response from the people (vv. 6-7), reported the basis of God's judgment (v. 8), brought the accusation against them (vv. 9-12), then brought God's verdict and announcement of his punishment on them (vv. 13-16).

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### ***"How have I burdened you?" (vv. 1-5)***

Serving as God's prosecuting attorney, Micah was to "plead" God's case, calling the mountains and hills as witnesses (vv. 1-2). He was bringing serious charges against the people for being unfaithful to the covenant they made with God (Exodus 19:3-8).

### **The Concept of "Covenant"**

A "covenant" was a binding agreement, a solemn oath between two parties, a promise that bound them together forever. In a covenant, each party carried certain obligations to fulfill, promises they were demanded to keep. In the case of God and Israel, the obligations were set out at Sinai. On Israel's side, they were obligated to obey Yahweh and keep his covenant. On Yahweh's part, if the people were obedient to him, then they

would be his special possession, his kingdom of priests, and his holy nation (Exodus 19:5-6). But the covenant between God and Israel did not originate in a vacuum.

At Mount Sinai Yahweh reminded the Israelites of what he had already done on their behalf, "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (Exodus 19:4). Right before he gave them his law, summed up in the Ten Commandments, Yahweh said, "***I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery***" (Exodus 20:2). God's grace always preceded his requirements. But at the same time, God's requirements always follow his grace. Salvation comes first, then the requirement of holy living. But the requirement of holy living always follows the salvation he offers. God's people were to be a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6).

Micah brought the accusation that the people had not lived up to their side of the bargain. To demonstrate this he first began to rehearse the gracious ways that God had treated them up until that point (vv. 3-5). He rescued them from the slavery of Egypt (v. 4). He gave them godly and capable leaders such as Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (v. 4). Even though they were by no means perfect, Moses served as a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), a judge (Exodus 18:13), and performed priestly duties (Exodus 24:6); Aaron served as a priest (Exodus 28:1), and Miriam was a prophetess and a worship leader (Exodus 15:20-21). Yahweh had also foiled the schemes of the enemy who sought to destroy them (v. 5). Balak the king of Moab wanted the Mesopotamian prophet Balaam to curse Israel, but Yahweh intervened and caused Balaam to pronounce a blessing instead (Numbers 24:15-19). Yahweh miraculously led Israel "from Shittim to Gilgal" across the flooding Jordan River into the Promised Land (Joshua 3:1-17).

The Israelites were to "remember" all of these things (v. 5). "Remembering" in the Old Testament is more than simply recalling past events. Instead, it was to bring the past events into the present – to relive the experience. They were to participate in those events and recommit themselves to the God who brought them to pass. As such, remembering is an act of worship (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

### ***"What does the Lord require of you?" (vv. 6-8)***

The people responded to God's accusation by complaining that God's demands on them were unreasonable. They were consumed with religious activity and complained that they could never bring enough for God to be satisfied. They asked, "***With what shall we come before the Lord?***" (v. 6). They thought that God was interested in the size or cost of their gifts. Speaking in exaggerated terms, the people complained that even yearling calves, thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil would not be acceptable as a gift to Yahweh. In fact, the people presented the horrendous thought of child sacrifice (v. 7), as shocking as that is, God would still not be impressed by their "dedication."

But the "good" that Yahweh wanted from his people was different. People cannot buy him off with huge offerings – neither the size nor the amount was the point. God is not interested in the offering as much as he is with the one who offers. A person's heart, their character, means far more to God than anything else they could bring him. From the very beginning God had clearly "showed" the people what was "good" and what he "required" (v. 8). "To act justly" means to arrange one's life according to God's will, or has been described as "truth in action." It consistently acts to restore God's order, peace, or "wholeness," putting things into the state that they ought to be. Justice works to maintain right relationships between people and God. The phrase "to love mercy" basically means to treat others with love and mercy. The term "mercy" in the original actually refers to "covenant love," a relationship bound by commitment (Joshua 2:12-14; Judges 1:24; 1 Kings 20:31). It connotes loyalty, security, concern, and mutual respect. God describes marriage as a "covenant" (Malachi 2:14), and the picture of loyalty, commitment, mercy, concern, and security found in a loving marriage pictures this kind of love. God's people are to "love mercy," to embrace this kind of attitude towards others always. Finally, God requires that his people "walk humbly with your God." He wants people to live daily with God as one's constant companion (Genesis 6:9), living lives that conform to his will.

### ***"Therefore, I have begun to destroy you" (vv. 9-16)***

How well were the people living by God's standards? Micah described these "wicked" people by their corrupt business practices. They gained "ill-gotten treasures" by cheating people in their trade with deceptive measures and dishonest scales, shortchanging the people with every transaction (vv. 10-11). They practiced "violence" and deception (v. 12). They followed the example of kings Omri and Ahab (v. 16; 1 Kings 16:25-28, 29-33) who were wicked and idolatrous, killing Yahweh's prophets (1 Kings 18:4) and stole others' property through lies and murder (1 Kings 21:1-16). As such, the people of Micah's day sought property and wealth through ruthless brutality.

In light of the condemning verdict of the wicked Israelites, Micah announced God's punishment (vv. 13-16). Yahweh himself would frustrate all of their best efforts, demonstrating how they fell short of God's covenant requirements (Deuteronomy 28:30-31, 38-40; Leviticus 26:26). Jerusalem will become a "ruin," and the people will become the scorn of the nations (v. 16).

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

The key to understanding and teaching this passage is to understand the concept of "covenant," a binding agreement that bears promises and obligations. Israel entered into a "covenant" with Yahweh at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:3-8), binding her forever to the God who had rescued them from slavery. God promised to provide and care for them, to love and lead them, to bind them to himself forever as his people and him as their God. Israel had broken the covenant, spurned the covenant relationship with

Yahweh, and disobeyed God's covenant requirements at virtually every turn. Now Yahweh was taking his people Israel to court to prove Israel's guilt. The evidence against Israel was overwhelming, but the people continued to want to buy God's affections through numerous offerings and religious activity. However, the quality of their lives in no way demonstrated their faithfulness. They failed in God's simple requirements of holy living. So God pronounced his judgment on his beloved people.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***God's Requirements***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Micah 6:1-16

#### **Background Text**

Micah 6

#### **Main Idea**

Because of God's grace extended towards us, we should be faithful to him by living the kinds of lives that please him.

#### **Question to Explore**

What does God require of his people?

#### **Teaching Aim**

The church will evaluate their own personal lives regarding their faithfulness to God. They will live lives that demonstrate justice and kindness towards others.

#### **Connect with Life:**

As the group gathers, hand each member a blank sheet of paper and give this instruction: "Do the right thing (do what is right or correct) with this sheet of paper."

Wait and see the reaction of the people. They will probably ask for more instructions, but don't give them any. Just let them try to figure out what you want on their own.

After several minutes of this, ask this question: "How did that exercise make you feel?"

Now ask: What did you want to do?"

Read for the group the "Introduction" of the **"Teacher Preparation"** explaining the dilemma of people who were not Israelites in the ancient world. Highlight the great advantage God's people had in knowing their God personally and knowing specifically what he required of them.

State: "Because of God's grace extended towards us, we should be faithful to him by living the kinds of lives that please him. If that is the case, what does God require of us?"

## **Guide the Study:**

### **1. Remember God's Grace (vv. 1-5)**

Have someone read verses 1-5.

Ask this, "Who did Micah call to serve as witnesses in this court case (vv. 1-2)?"

Explain the concept of "covenant" from the **"Teacher Preparation"**. (Exodus 19: 5-6)

State: "Let's notice the gracious ways that God had treated them up until that point (vv. 3-5)."

Have the people call out the different acts of grace mentioned in verses 3-5 and be ready to explain any of them based on notes from the **"Teacher Preparation"**.

Inquire: "What did Micah want the people to do with this information (v. 5)?" [remember].

Explain that "remembering" in the Bible involves more than bringing something to mind but also to relive the experience.

Encourage a discussion on this: "Why is it important for God's people to remember his acts of grace towards them?"

Extend the discussion: "What kind of attitude should such 'remembering' bring as a response?"

### **2. Reject Empty Religion (vv. 6-7, 9-15)**

Have someone read verses 6-7.

Open the study of these verses with this: "Who is speaking these words?" [the people]

Now have the group consider this question: "What kind of attitudes did they show regarding God's requirements of them?"

Point out that their faith was consumed with religious activity rather than a lifestyle.

Ask: "Was God interested in the size or cost of their gifts?"

Have someone read verses 9-15.

Seek a mutual answer from the group: "How well were the people living by God's standards?"

Present this activity for the group: Have the group list the wicked actions of the people found in verses 9-15. Be ready to point out any background information necessary taken from the "**Teacher Preparation**".

Ask, "What would God's punishment be upon them (vv. 13-16)?"

Add this to close out the study of these verses: "What is going to happen to their beloved city of Jerusalem and its temple (v. 16; cf. 3:12)?"

### **3. Live from the Inside Out (v. 8)**

Have someone read verse 8.

Inquire: "Did Yahweh hide his requirements from his people?"

Also: "Which was God more interested in, the 'offering' or the 'offerer' (ie: the person giving the offering)?"

**Leader, The following explanation is important. It is the heart and point of the whole lesson.**

1. Explain that a person's heart, their character, means far more to God than anything else they could bring him.
2. Tell the group how important it is to understand this God-given concept.
3. Ask them if they have any questions about this or, honestly, they have any problems with believing this idea.
4. Give time for anyone to muster courage to question the concept.

Seek an answer: "How many 'requirements' did Micah list?" Use the information from the "**Teacher Preparation**" to clarify each requirement.

Conclude with these three questions:

- 1) "Have God's requirements changed for his people today?"
- 2) "How well are you personally following these requirements?"
- 3) "How well do you think our church is following these requirements?"

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

In light of what we have studied in God's word today:

What does God want you to *believe*?

What does God want you to *do*?

Is there a *promise* here you need to claim?

Is there an *example* you need to follow? Or to avoid?

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***God's Requirements*** **Micah 6:1-16**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS FOR US ALL**

Continue to memorize the wonderful words of Micah 6:8. Let it be a part of the storehouse of scripture which forms your way of worship and service. Discuss what it might mean for you to live by this teaching.

***He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.***

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***God's Requirements***  
**Micah 6:1-16****Beginning the Service:**

Sing:

**Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 534; CCLI # 390  
Public Domain

**Yes, Lord, Yes**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 445; CCLI # 12224

**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

By definition, history begins with written records. For the 500,000 Pashai of Afghanistan, their history is just beginning. As recently as July, 2003, their language finally took a written form. The Pashai live in the mountains along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many Pashai people are bilingual, speaking both Pashai and Pashto, the dominant language in eastern Afghanistan. More than 80 percent cannot read in either language. The Taliban prohibited speaking minority languages in public.

When the Taliban regime was defeated in 2001, the Pashai could again publicly speak their own language. Decades of war and years of abusive rule by the Taliban took away their opportunity to attend school. Now, for the first time, Pashai adults are learning to write in their heart language. They need our prayers that they will have opportunity to hear and to read God's Word. And that they would be brave enough to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

## Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

### Impress His Commandments on Your Children *Deuteronomy 28:1-6*

***If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands, I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth.***

***All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:***

***You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.  
The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land  
And the young of your livestock – the calves of your herds and the lambs  
of your flocks.***

***Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.  
You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.***

These words are a part of the promises of God which Moses gave to the people of Israel. Shortly after giving the Ten Commandments as recorded in Deuteronomy 5:7-21, Moses tells the people to ***Be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. (32-33).***

The Israelite people were told ***Love the Lord your God with all you heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deuteronomy 6: 4-7).***

Throughout the book of Micah there has been condemnation for the false prophets and religious leaders and for the political leaders. They have failed to give the people the kind of leadership which God expected them to give.

But the parents of children had failed as well. Apparently this failure had gone on for generations. Parents were to have impressed the teachings of Moses on the minds and hearts of the children. It was to have been a part of the daily routine of the family. Children were to be taught of the blessings to be received when obedience to God's way was the ordinary way of life in the home. There was to be talk of the blessings of God in the past. The stories of the Israelite people were to be told in the conversation around the dinner table or during the long walks which families made to do tasks as necessary as gathering firewood or water. If the parents had been faithful to this kind of teaching, the story of the Israelite people would have been very different.

What does that say to us as parents and family members today?

We live in a world in which it is either completely necessary or becoming increasingly necessary for the truths of the Bible and the ways of the Lord to be taught by parents. We should not view this as a disadvantage, but as the way in the Lord always intended for spiritual truths to be taught.

Begin by having a heart for God. You cannot transmit to children that which is not an authentic part of your own life. How long has it been since your children heard you say how thankful you are for what God has given you or done for you? Is conversation about God and His blessings so awkward for you that it seldom happens at your house? If so you need to begin in small ways to share with your family the ways in which you understand God working in your own life.

By talking of God's purposes and instructions when we are home and when we are away (of course, we are either at home or away all of the time) we will imprint our children with these formative influences. By talking about Biblical guidelines and desires when we lie down and when we rise up (another pair which may signify that this is something we do all the time) we will begin and end our day with a focus on God's care and love.

Age-appropriate, loving comments about God may be as simple as "What a beautiful day God has given us" or "Wow, what a great meal. Thank you, God, for food to eat".

Few things are as sweet to hear as a young child expressing a simply prayer. Every family member can pray at meal time or bed time or when there is a specific need for help or for thanksgiving. Parents can model giving thanks and asking for the needs of others close to home and far away. Prayer connects the family with one another and with God.

Learning to love to read the Bible should be essential for every family. Short passages of Scripture read at meal time and/or bedtime can set the stage for a lifetime of loving the Word of God. Finding verses which bring comfort in times of sadness or disappointment teaches children how to cope with life. Parents must model joyful study

of Biblical truths if children are to understand how essential this is for Christian growth. Regular, systematic study of the Bible is less and less popular in churches today. But how will we learn the truths of the Bible if we do not study it?

Look around your home and ask what a first time visitor would see. Is there art work, books and Bibles in evidence which indicate a love for God? Are there scriptures displayed which the family is learning together? Or, is the television tuned to a station and the noise level so high that conversation is impossible? Are children so involved in the game they are playing on their iPhone or other game player that they do not even acknowledge the visitor in the home?

What is the impact of the consumerist/technological society in the life of your family? Does Dad have to have the latest technological innovation? If so, children will want those as well. Is there a balance between those things which make life easier and those which are merely innovative and cutting edge? How much time do family members spend using technology other than for work or school?

How much quality time does the family spend together? Some studies have shown parents spend only seconds or a few minutes in real conversation. Time is the best gift parents can give children. And some of that time needs to be spent in conversation about the challenges of the week, the temptations experienced, the “big” thoughts engendered by what is learned at school. Do family “stories” enrich the conversation?

Has the family participated in an activity of service to others? Serving meals to the homeless during a holiday period, gathering the abundance of a harvest to be made into dehydrated soup to feed the hungry around the world, or shoveling snow for a senior citizen or a neighbour who is ill are only a few of the many “helping” activities which enrich the loves of the giver as much as the receiver.

Does your family “keep the Sabbath”. The Sabbath was designed for rest from the busy schedule of the rest of the week. Most sports teams schedule practice and games on Sunday. Shopping malls and grocery stores are as busy on Sunday as any other day. Some families designate Sunday as a “family” day but spend it in such a way that every member of the family is in a different place and activity. After corporate worship, does the family share what was meaningful to them about the worship time. No one approach for “keeping the Sabbath” is right for every family. But every Christian family must guard time for worship and family togetherness if those values are to be cherished by the children of the family and passed on to the next generation.

Does the church as a whole concern itself with the spiritual growth of the children in its midst? Are friendships forged between older people in the church and families with younger children? Could you ask someone in the church to pray with you for a family need? A noted theologian, Marva Dawn, expressed these thoughts: “I believe it is impossible for parents to raise Christian children alone. The powers of evil are too dominant; the culture around us too post-Christian; our children have too many options.

Parents need the total support of the entire Christian community, of a vital Body of believers who contribute to the passing on of the faith” (Dawn, Marva J. **Is it a Lost Cause? Having the Heart of God for the Church’s Children.** Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997).

It is easy for us as believers to criticize schools, government, and other outside influences for the problems of our society. We need to ask ourselves if we are following the Biblical mandate to impress upon our children the teachings of our faith. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles whose children are grown have the privilege of praying for those within their family circle as well as those within their church family. Few people have no family for whom to pray.

We began our worship time with the quote from Micah 6:8

***He has showed you, O man, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
And to walk humbly with your God.***

May we ask ourselves how we can incorporate this teaching into the life of our family this week. How can we think and talk about it as we are at home and are in the car driving to school or soccer or music lessons? How can it be that teaching that we remember as we tuck our children in at night or awaken them in the morning? Can it be a word of encouragement we send to a far away grandchild? Can it open a discussion for a teenager who is concerned about issues such as sex-trade or corporate corruption?

### **Call to Commitment:**

May we commit ourselves to thoughtful teaching of God’s truth to our family members this week.

### **Concluding the Service:**

Read the following blessing for your church as you dismiss the service:

### **Psalms 103:1-5**

Make copies for each participant for use during the Gathering Time.

+++++(Cut here)+++++

Micah 6:8  
He has showed you, O man, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
And to walk humbly with your God.

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