

HOW TO PREPARE FOR WORSHIPPING AT HOME

(Adapted from a paper by Beth McCaw, Glacier Presbytery, University of Dubuque Seminary)

While we worship in our homes, remember that Sunday is still the Lord's Day. We will be encountering the living Lord! And—ANY day can become the Lord's Day for us when we decide to worship.

This means that we should prepare our hearts and physical environment as we come to our chosen time of worship. It's easy to be too casual when we're all staying inside a lot. Rather than just "tuning in" to the service as you wash the dishes or sit with the dryer running, make this a special, set-apart moment, like you would for Christmas dinner or a birthday party. Think of our Jewish friends, many of whom do this so well in preparing for observing the Sabbath in their homes each week. (Take 7 minutes and watch this wonderful clip from "Fiddler on the Roof" to get a sense of the power of home worship: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3-AgF_fU9s). Or think of the meaningfulness of lighting the candles on your home Advent wreath or opening your Advent calendar each night before Christmas. With a little intention, on Sundays you can create this same expectation.

Some ideas:

- Consider wearing something special for the worship service. Maybe everyone stays in their pajamas, or maybe everyone gets dressed up a bit.
- Consider gathering around the dining table (or some other spot for everyone) with a special cloth and candles (and a laptop or tablet, if you're going to watch a live or recorded service or sermon).
- Print out the worship bulletin to work through it or have it in front of you on the computer screen. Take turns on different Sundays being the leader.
- Make sure you have your Bibles handy. If a family member is musical, plan to sing your own choices of songs and hymns.
- As the service starts, perhaps light a candle (or two or three). Or maybe ring a small bell if you have one. When the service ends, ring the bell again and extinguish your candles. Sit in silence or journal for just a short while.
- This is a great season in which to start journaling. Everyone can have their own. Have it and a pen handy for reflection after the message. Look back on it over the weeks to come to see how God has been growing in your lives.
- Be sure to participate out loud using the responsive readings and songs—this will not only help you worship God, but it will connect you to all the others also praying and singing along to the service in their homes.
- You can have your own "coffee/cocoa and refreshments" ready for after the service or allow the smells of a Sunday meal cooking in the crock pot to reach you during worship. Sunday is always a celebration, and celebration usually means food!
- Establish other new repeatable rituals and Sunday customs that will become meaningful spiritual anchors for your family during this time.
- If it's just you, enjoy this intimate time devoted to God, or call up a friend to share the service together on speakerphone or Zoom.

What are YOUR ideas or traditions for worshipping at home? Share them with thomas@hopfortulsa.com so we can pass them along to others.