

## **Ten Reasons Why Your Children Should Sit with You in Worship**

In the modern American church children are often viewed as a distraction to worship and if present, are only tolerated rather than desired. In addition, much of the programming of the 21st century American church separates rather than unites families. But families are the second highest value at Heritage (after the gospel) and our programming intentionally reflects our distinctive family ministry philosophy. As such, our pastor and church leadership encourage families to sit together in our corporate gathering, especially after a child reaches the first grade. For this reason, Heritage does not provide children's ministries beyond kindergarten during our morning corporate gathering (although every grade is available during the Community Group hour).

Often, the greatest hindrance to worshipping as a family is not children but an adult's understanding of worship. Every Christian should understand that worship ascribes "worth" to God. Worship centers on God. Its purpose is for God's glory, not human benefit. It is not self-motivated, self-interested or self-serving. So worship does not center on what we get out of it but what we give to God in it. Heritage defines the success of our corporate worship by how it displays God's glory and rightly reflects His person and works, centering our hearts, souls and minds on God.

The better a parent understands this concept the more apt parents are to desire their children to worship with them. The earlier this God-glorifying thought process can begin in the life of a child the greater its potential for long-term, life-transformation. With this God-centered understanding families can worship together and rejoice, not in what they get out of the corporate gathering but what the family together gives to God in worship.

Here are our reasons for encouraging families to worship together.

1 – God has given parents the primary responsibility for spiritually training their children.

2 – No one is better or more qualified to spiritually train children than their parents.

3 – Worship at church presents a model for family worship at home. It trains parents and children in what worship is and how to worship God.

4 – Children need to see their parents participate in worship and experience that worship with them.

5 - The most influential moments in a child's life are often not the moments that parents program but the moments that just happen. Worship opportunities are filled with these moments.

6 – Parents' understanding of worship, attention to worship, participation in worship and benefit from worship is increased as role models for their children in worship.

7 – Throughout the Old Testament, God trained Israel to worship appropriately, giving them direction for accepted and rejected worship. Parents should also train their children to appropriately worship God. Effective training involves instruction and demonstration.

8 – Worshipping with children helps parents and children understand that the worship time is not for parents to relax or children to have fun but to focus on God.

9 – Worship is always a challenge, both to adults and children. Children do not infringe on a parent's worship experience but encourage a parent's worship and help a parent fulfill his or her divine responsibilities.

10 – Children are the "greatest" in God's kingdom. They bring elements to worship that adults need to see, hear and experience.

To help families rejoice in God during Heritage's worship times, our Children's Ministry has prepared a brochure entitled, "Sunday starts on Saturday," to give families positive direction on successfully worshipping together. You may find that brochure on this web site.