

Together in God's Presence:

Children and Families in Corporate Worship

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Printed in the United States of America.

Cover design by Mihira Jayasekera, April 1999.

Introduction

As a Christian parent, there is perhaps no greater passion than the passion for our children to know Christ and to experience the power of the gospel in their lives. Related to this, we all desire for our children to “like” church and to experience church in a way that is relevant to them! And then, there is this issue of corporate worship. And trust me, as the father of three *and* the pastor of many young families over the years, I think I have heard it all, if not also said it all myself concerning my own parental concerns and experiences:

It involves so much work to get my children up out of bed, fed and to church, ONLY to hear them say, “I don’t understand anything (it’s always exaggerated isn’t it) that is being said!”

I have a hard enough time concentrating in worship than to be preoccupied with keeping my child quiet enough for everyone else to worship. Wouldn’t it be better for others if my children were in their own worship service somewhere? A “children’s church” perhaps?

I’m afraid I am turning my child off to Christian faith if they don’t want to go to church because it’s not “fun.”

Well I think you get the point—and in each and every one of these issues and questions, there are I believe understandable fears and desires. WE all want our children to “like” church and to be turned on to Jesus. But herein we need to be careful. Things aren’t always what they seem. There are many unspoken assumptions about true Christian conversion, the value and purpose of worship, even the developmental nature of children that all need to be examined in the light of Christian experience through the ages but especially in the light of sacred scripture. And so the purpose of this study is to briefly consider this issue of children in church. Should we strive to bring them into the worship with adults at as young an age as is possible without undue disturbance to parents and fellow worshippers? Should we establish an alternative worship service for children? What can we do to help our children participate more in worship, albeit before, during and after worship? These are some of the things we want to consider in this pamphlet.

Covenantal Worship—A Great Privilege?

First, let's step back for a minute and ask the question- What is so big a deal about covenant worship in the first place? To begin, we can assuredly say that participation in Christ-centered, corporate worship is the single most important privilege we do as Christians and Christian families. "Forsake not the assembling together" is the culminating exhortation in the epistle to the Hebrews wherein the picture of the church as a worshipping assembly is nowhere more powerfully presented than in chapter 12:8-29 in reference to our assembling together *on earth* as it is in heaven:

*You **have come (present tense)** to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, **23** and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, **24** and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Hebs. 12: 22-23*

Just think, our assembling together *on earth as it is in heaven* is the ultimate experience of participating in Christ's ascended ministry in the present age. It is like nothing else we do throughout the week. It is a time for the people of God to enter into the unique, albeit mediated presence of Christ on earth wherein we are at once united to Him and enabled to transcend the rubble of our lives in a heavenly estate. What spiritual recalibration awaits us in our heavenly estate through an "on earth as it is in heaven" perspective gained from worship? And who ought to attend but those who attend in heaven! And who would you expect to be present in heavenly worship—just adults, or adults together with children? E.g. all who belong to Christ! To risk sounding trite, can it be fathomed that there will be two services of worship before the throne room of God—one for adults and one for children?

Another aspect of worship "on earth as it is in heaven" is the necessary recalibration into the culture of grace wherein we ALL see ourselves as children of God in humble reliance upon him for our very lives. There is perhaps no more difficult thing for us to believe than that God loves us in our humility, in our brokenness, yes, even in our dependency upon him. Would children being present in worship assist in this lesson? But more to

the point, as children discover their own spiritual impotency, would we have them separated from the adults as we discover our own impotency as well in route to the means of grace? Even a “visual” of the Lord’s Table communicates volumes to any who understand even its most rudimentary meaning—that Christ wants to be with us and is willing to dine with us IN OUR HUMBLE ESTATES!

Just think about it, what conviction is being formed, and reformed again and again by the experience of Christ’s ascended prophetic ministry on earth as it is in heaven? But then again, there is an even more significant event taking place in worship, an event like no other event on earth. Worship is a context wherein in our participation in the glory of God vs. our own glory, we are ironically being set free from that which destroys us—namely, and in the words of Paul to Titus, our “bondage to various passions and pleasures.” How important is it in this conversation to remember that the very thing we need most is NOT to confuse “good worship” with placating our own self-oriented “passions and pleasures.” Anyone who has been in ministry for very long has observed that how we worship in many respects reflects how we live. And if we live as slaves to our “passions and pleasures” we are often, if not always, destroyed by them. Oh, that we might rediscover in worship what *really* is satisfying as related to the grace of Christ in the gospel unto the glory of God! And so perhaps more than anything else, we need worship that will cause our worlds to rotate not around us but around God, and where life itself is shown to flourish not around our own attempts at fulfilling our own selfish desires, but in the reception of the life that only God can give to us as received freely by faith. It’s this meta-narrative of worship that we come not to glorify ourselves and our perceived idea of fun as presupposed in this particular feeling or experience, but to do what we were created to do, which is to worship and praise God as revealed in creation and redemption to the praise of his glorious grace, even as to be set free in this experience! (c.f. Eph.1)

And so at CPC, we have tried to carefully pattern our worship not after our own desires and passions per se, but after the same four movement pattern of the ancient worship of God in the OT temple as fulfilled in Christ and carefully reinstated in the four movement pattern that is depicted of heavenly worship in Revelations 4 (*c.f. the side panels of our worship folder.*). We believe that to even participate in these four movements themselves, however much or little we can cognitively understand about

them, is to participate in at least the culture of the gospel logic itself and to draw us nearer to God. We would do well therefore *not* to underestimate the power of worship to all those who believe, even those who are unable to believe with much by way of rational cognition. (For more on a theology of covenantal worship as related to the ascended ministry of Christ today, you may hear the sermon entitled “Into The Heavenly Festal Gathering: An exposition on Worship in Hebrews 12:18-29” that can be located on our church website).

In sum, and to say it plainly, is our time, effort, and money any better spent than in Christ-centered, covenantal worship-- and presumably this includes our children, or does it?

Covenant Children In Covenant Worship? A Brief Biblical Survey

And so the question all this begs if you are a parent especially is, “How does all this relate to my child(ren)? Does the command to “forsake not the assembling together” imply that our children, if at all possible, should participate together with their parents, or do we establish an alternative “children’s church?”

To begin, we often refer to our children at CPC as “covenant children.” What does this mean exactly? It means that your baptized child is no longer who he or she is in isolation from the greater church of Jesus Christ on earth, even as the church on earth we believe is organically united to the church of heaven (see above). And so yes, we believe children are and will be present in heavenly worship! Your child, if baptized, is baptized into the covenant community and with all the covenant privileges of those yet awaiting full confirmation by adult profession of faith in order to “renew” this covenant by admission to the renewal “Feast of Heaven” in the “Lord’s Supper” each week. We think here of Christ’s clear admonishment in Mt. 19:13-15, “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” Now couldn’t this just as well read, “Let not the children forsake the assembling together with Christ”? For you see, the purpose noted for their coming to Christ was to receive from Him the priestly blessing that would have been the culminating event in covenantal worship in that day under the temple context. (Mk 10:13-17) At the very least, every child who participates in worship will experience its culture, perhaps receive some understanding, and will receive the benediction of God which speaks in a most essential

way that God is for them, not against them, something that can't be reiterated enough, it seems to me.

Perhaps it's true, given the modernist-individualist slant on things that is all around us, that it might seem to us a stretch for this teaching of Christ above to apply to children being present in worship. But in the 1st century context, and especially given the history of redemption in the Old Testament, to be excluded from God's "temple" presence on earth was paramount to being excluded from God's Kingdom! So for instance (if per chance you are interested to see for yourself), try reading the following passages—all of which describe in very clear terms the presence of children, even young children, in corporate worship throughout the ages of Biblical history—and ask yourself if the overwhelming bias entering into the New Covenant wouldn't have been to include children in the assembling together in corporate worship. (c.f. OT: Joshua 8:35, 2Chron 20:13, 2Chron 31:16-18, Dt. 31:9-13, Joel 2:16, Ps 8:1-2; NT: Mt. 14:13-21 where children heard Jesus preach, Mt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17, and even Acts 2:38 wherein in a temple context of worship children were explicitly mentioned as present.)

For instance, that parents were specifically instructed to be careful that their children keep the Sabbath holy, which included Sabbath worship is made clear in Ex. 20:8-11. Children were to be instructed in the covenant of the Lord, particularly by their parents. This is the point of Deut. 6:7 which is related to the obligations and privileges of covenantal worship. And we discover that entire families were commanded to listen to the reading of the law every seventh year in the context of holy convocations (Deut. 31:9-13). In Joel 2:16 the Lord invites "nursing children" to gather with the rest of God's people in sacred assembly. To be sure, the covenant community *as expressed in assembling together* consisted of all believers together with their children.

To say it even more frankly-- if but to start us thinking about all of this-- is there another warning in all of scripture so chilling than the warning sounded by Christ In Mt. 19 that it is better for a millstone to be placed on someone's head and thrown into the sea than to prevent even one little one from stumbling in their approach to Christ and the salvific benediction that he alone can grant? (Note, right after his exhortation in Mt 18 concerning children's access to Him and the priestly blessing!). Who are

these “little ones” today and in the context of Mt. 19, what was it for them to “stumble” if not to be hindered from coming to Christ? Again, in the words of Christ, it would “be better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and thrown into the sea (18:6).”

In short, the overwhelming benefit of the doubt from redemptive history would move us to see corporate worship, however much it may be “work” for us and/or our children, to be a great privilege. WE would need some clear indication to the contrary before we would allow even one of our “little ones” to forsake the assembling together in communion with Christ as mediated in corporate worship—and none exists in all of the New Testament. Quite the contrary, it would appear even by the content of the epistles themselves that children were present in all corporate worship of the early church! (See for instance Eph. 6:1 and Paul’s direct appeal to children who were evidently present in the covenant assembly of worship.)

But what about....?

Okay, you say, but what about all those objections and difficulties that we mentioned earlier? On the surface at least, doesn’t it feel at times to be counterproductive for our children to participate with parents in worship, at least as early as is possible without undue burden on parents and other worshippers (I will explain “undue” later)?

We should briefly consider then some of the unsuspecting assumptions in many of our concerns and objections. What if, for example, the assumptions about what our children are supposed to be getting out of worship are themselves the cause of stumbling! And how does all this involve a developmental understanding, even an appreciation of spirituality and communion with God? Does worship need to be “fun” in order to be good worship, much less worship that benefits us? Or could an expectation for “fun” as related to worship and even to life itself, expose something that could be the very obstacle itself to faith that worship is best suited to address? What does it mean to have understanding and is it always cognitive knowledge or self-consciously “rational?” How much of our expectations are really about the meaning or even “logic” of worship itself? And what role do we have as parents to “parent” our children in these expectations rather than merely to assume the expectations of our children? In short, what does it mean to disciple our children in the

worship of God? And how might this be related to their becoming disciples of Christ even?

Okay, so you see my point. There are so many unspoken expectations that we bring to this topic that I think we would readily let go of if only we were to stop long enough to think about them. So for instance:

What about worship being fun?

This is nothing against having fun! The question here is whether or not *worship* is supposed to be fun! Is this the criteria for “good worship?” Clearly, even a cursory review of scripture reveals that worship is never evaluated in terms of its “fun.” Rather, it is evaluated throughout in reference to its effect upon God as then to have a reciprocal effect upon us toward salvation. Worship is to God and for God, even as it turns out that this is to our great benefit and ultimate happiness in that we are prepared to receive as “gift” the “shalom” of his redemptive blessing. This isn’t to say that worship, at least sometimes, can’t be deeply pleasurable and fulfilling! It can be! But it is also to say that the way “up” in terms of our flourishing is the way “down” according to Christ, and that worship in its essence is an act of turning our affections and desires away from ourselves and giving ourselves and our desires to God for his own glory who alone is worthy to be the center of everything—not us! This sets us free from the very desires and pleasures that will be our undoing! And this is a “learned” trait very much related to our journey to Christ and Christian discipleship!

I think here of 2 Tim.3, “lovers of self... lovers of pleasure... lovers of money... rather than lovers of God. Isn’t it ironic, according to 2 Tim 3 it’s often the things that we love that can destroy us, not what we hate! Again, not that our goal is to hate worship—quite the contrary! Rather to judge worship merely by how much pleasure we get from it is less to worship God than to worship ourselves, which is the very problem that we have with God and the cause of our undoing in the first place. Oh that we wouldn’t “put an obstacle” in the way of our children to God! And we would do just this if our parenting consisted of turning them over to their desires “to have fun” as the sum basis of evaluating life and even worship. This is to cause them to stumble if ever there was a way to do it! Rather than parenting them to see the wisdom of entrusting themselves to God who alone can satisfy us, and to begin the lesson that God, not themselves, is the center of the universe, we are in danger of delivering them over to the very spirit

that is in the world that says” trust yourself, you become the arbiter of good and evil and let me help you do what you “want. (sound familiar?)

What about “understanding” in worship?

Here again, there are many unspoken assumptions here that we might want to expose. For instance, is it to be assumed that if we don’t understand everything that we don’t understand anything, or at least enough? It’s true, there is a developmental and even an existential context to what we can cognitively know or understand. Our children may not have enough life to understand the meaning of something said or done in worship. The sermon might be intellectually over their heads (although I am always amazed at how much they do understand- in fact story after story could be told about this). But this doesn’t mean they are not understanding, and perhaps exactly what they need to understand in their stage of spiritual development.

For instance, at CPC, if a child only understands that something that is a very big deal is happening in worship, something that even turns their parents into children, then they have learned a whole lot! How huge is it for them to see their parents passionate in worship toward God, submissive in their demeanor toward God, impacted by God’s truth and grace as to even be “undone” by God and standing to confess again along with others their firm conviction for God, and then all of this resulting in this eating a meal with God? Might all this be the very beginning of their being brought to Christ for His covenant blessing? To take away even these “images” is to put an obstacle in their road to Christ!

Or take the four-part movement of our covenantal worship as informed by the logic of the gospel. Even if they understand not a word of what is said, they pick it up by the very feeling in the room that corresponds to “praise’ (there is something bigger in the world than even my parents), Confession and absolution (there is something sad about us that when confessed somehow leads to good news concerning God’s love for us), Word and Sacrament (there is this time when my parents sit quietly to receive from God’s instruction and promises and this all somehow leads to everyone believing again in God and having some kind of special meal with God (word and sacrament) and that at the end the whole thing ends up with everyone praising and worshipping God, only to end with the leader raising

his hands as if to touch all of us and speaking words of blessing on us (coronation and benediction). This is the gospel logic, and we would do well not to withhold it from our children even when all they can understand is images and feelings, less rationalistic cognition!

About then, this issue of children understanding in worship, I think John Piper said it well such that it is worth a rather lengthy quote from him on this point:

In sum, children absorb a tremendous amount that is of value. And this is true even if they say they are bored. Music and words become familiar. The message of the music starts to sink in. The form of the service comes to feel natural. Even if most of the sermon goes over their heads, experience shows that children hear and remember remarkable things.

The content of the prayers and songs and sermon gives parents unparalleled opportunities to teach their children the great truths of our faith. If parents would only learn to query their children after the service and then explain things, the children's capacity to participate would soar.

There is a sense of solemnity and awe which children should experience in the presence of God. This is not likely to happen in children's church. A deep sense of the unknown and the mysterious can rise in the soul of a sensitive child in solemn worship—if his parents are going hard after God themselves. A deep moving of the magnificence of God can come to the young, tender heart through certain moments of great hymns or "loud silence" or authoritative preaching. These are of immeasurable value in the cultivation of a heart that fears and loves God.

We do not believe that children who have been in children's church for several years between the ages of 6 and 12 will be more inclined or better trained to enjoy worship than if they had spent those years at the side of their parents. In fact, the opposite is probably the case. It will probably be harder to acclimate a 10- or 12-year-old to a new worship service than a 5- or 6-year-old. The cement is much less wet, and vast possibilities of shaping the impulses of the heart are gone.

What about the distraction of having children in worship?

It's true, children are distracting at times—both to us but also to the guy behind us. But here again, we ought not to assume that this is so bad—at least not to a point! Is it so bad for us to learn that worship is not just for us as adults, but for everyone who belongs to God? How might this aid in our own journey to be set free from our own desires and passions? Covenantal worship assumes the blessed presence of whole families (see above). We even take vows at our children's baptism to this effect. This means that there is something “good news” relative to our spiritual health in all this that we do not want to avoid in worship. I suspect that children are much more of a gift to us than we might think. How many times did my children “feel” or “see” something in worship that I didn't feel or see, and then bless me by their observation—I can't count them!! And how much do I need them in worship if even to help rid me of the love of self and personal pleasure as a means to really worshipping God and enjoying HIM!

That being said, at CPC, we do provide childcare to be used in ways that are consistent with the developmental place of our children. The intent here is to be careful that we don't ask too much of our children relative to their stage of development and worship as to exasperate them, or us as parents and/or other worshippers. Parents are encouraged to gradually acclimate our children to worship through successive approximation until such time as a child can remain in worship the full time.

Now the key here is to see nursery/child care as to avoid exasperation, less to offer a substitute “childish” version of worship—which is often not worship at all and clearly without the images and feelings that are gained from being included in the “real” worship service with adults. In other words, nursery is intentionally NOT another program or worship service. Quite the contrary, this is exactly what our children don't need. Children need, even more than adults, “down time.” Our achievement driven culture has tended to over structure and program our children's lives in a way that many developmental child psychologists have argued is detrimental to our children and their development even (c.f. David Elkind, *Mis-Education: Preschoolers at Risk* for instance) This of course is not the time to delve into developmental psychology. But it IS a time to think about the admonishment to parents NOT to exasperate their children. There is a time when the best thing for our children is to have fun together

in playtime. (not worship time!!) And why not with their friends at church? WE see then our child care during worship as a time to open up the much needed emotional release valve so that children are more prepared to participate in the other child-oriented activities that have been carefully designed with them in mind during our Christian education period (assembly of songs and child-directed teaching along with a more hands-on and interactive time for teaching our children the Christian faith in Sunday school.

And so we encourage parents to see child care during worship as less a “program” and more a much needed unstructured time where they can play with their friends in a way that will release some of their natural pent up energy and discipline. WE DON’T see nursery as a time to make them “sit still and quiet” or to do this and not do that beyond some civility in their play one with another... (Maybe with the addition of storytelling and/or some fun activity at most that is related to Christian faith perhaps?)

Some Tips for Parenting Our Children In and For Worship

At the very core of what it means to disciple your children in worship is the maxim, “worship is caught as much as it is taught.” WE learn to worship by doing it, even as we do it in order to learn how to enjoy and benefit from it! And so with this in mind, here are some general tips for child discipleship for worship. I suspect that some of our difficulty of children in worship is due to our having not thought proactively enough about how we can train them and prepare them for worship. And so here are a few tried and true tips as collected from various sources used in churches that I am aware of.

1. Never, ever, forget that you, their parent(s), are their #1 greatest object lesson in worship. And so the first “tip” is to watch yourself. The greatest stumbling block for children in worship is that their parents do not cherish worship. Children can feel the difference between a grudgingly fulfilled duty vs. a sense of passion and conviction, even delight, in the “work” (liturgy) of worship through you. Therefore the first and most important job of a parent is to fall in love with the worship of God. You can’t impart what you don’t possess. So spend time throughout the week cultivating your relationship with the Lord in prayer and the Word. Ask God to give you a heart for worship and a desire to commune with you. And avoid at all cost showing a negative

attitude yourself about worship.

2. Prepare your children for worship throughout the week, but especially on Saturday. Get Sunday clothes ready, say a prayer together that worship would glorify God and that we would have soft hearts toward God in worship. And make sure you help them have a good night's sleep! Review constantly with your children why worship is such a big deal, and perhaps give them things they can be praying for during worship, and noticing in worship, as to help them feel/see/know God better.
3. Come early to church, take your children to the bathroom so that they will not have to go during the worship. Give them a bulletin, if they are able to read, and go over the different elements of worship. Explain any unfamiliar words to them.
4. Sit with your children and, if necessary, whisper instruction during the service. Encourage them to LOOK, LISTEN and LEARN. If you have a large family, invite single adults to sit with you. This will emphasize that all believers are in the Lord's family. It will also allow singles to fulfill their vows to assist in the nurture of the covenant children by helping one of your children with the hymns, the Scripture reading, the confession of sin, etc.
5. Help them look up the Scripture passage and fill in the blanks on the Sermon Note sheets designed for children on the back table in the foyer. If they can't read or write, ask them to draw a picture of something that is happening in worship, or something that is present in the room itself—perhaps a picture of the pulpit and preacher, a picture of the Lord's Table, etc. (It is NOT advised that we just hand them something to do or read that is unrelated to worship—the message in that is the exact opposite of what we want to be conveying. It would be better to get them out of the room and into the childcare where they will not associate twaddle with worship, or distraction with worship, etc)
6. Pray with and for your children both before and after worship. Above all, pray for your children to grow in their love for Christ and his church. No amount of practical advice can substitute for the work of God's

Spirit in the lives of your kids. There is no magic formula for producing children who passionately worship King Jesus. God has called us to train our children and set a godly example before them, but at the end of the day we must all lay our children at the foot of the cross and call upon our gracious God to be true to his promises and finish the work he has begun in the hearts of our covenant children.

7. Be patient with your children, but also be consistent and persistent about your instruction. Remember the goal is not for them to learn to be quiet during worship but to learn to worship.
8. As fitting their development, ALWAYS try to have a conversation about worship after it is all over—perhaps on the way home or while eating a dinner together. It is important that they see you also taking worship seriously and humbly.
9. You may want to train your children in how to sit still during the week leading up to worship. Use, for instance the family meal as an opportunity to teach your children to consider others in the way they handle themselves. Or family meals in themselves can be a time when children learn to be polite and sit still in consideration for the rest of the family. This will play out on Sundays!
10. Try to treat Sunday as a day of joy and celebration. Save something special for Sundays to mark it as a special day. (For instance, if you give your kids ice cream, give them two scoops on Sunday.) Try to create special Sunday traditions and activities that your children will look forward to all week long. Mark it as a special day. Worship on Sunday ought to inform the whole of the day. It is a day to celebrate the blessings of God in our lives. It is a day to coronate God as our king. It is a day to consecrate all of who we are and what we do throughout the week in submission to his will and glory. We all, including our children, need to “rest” from that which tends to make us depend on OUR work and activity as the basis of our human flourishing. If at all possible, let the whole day express what we in effect say and believe in worship—that life is a gift, and all things redemptive about life is received as a gift— we can ceremonially and practically experience this both in worship, and in the way we reflect on worship throughout the day. (Note: the issue of “Sabbath” keeping is difficult and the

“exceptions” we allow in terms of what we do and don’t do is difficult—but the key here is to bias toward “rest” from our labors and normal activities in order to enjoy God and one another as families and church. The key then is at most to make “exceptions” for acts of mercy and/or necessity—if “necessity” however, becomes the rule—we should at least consider whether it really is a necessity or not!)

11. Let go of your children enough so that they can enjoy the full body of Christ. It DOES take a “village” to raise godly children, and that village is the church. The varieties of gifts and graces that are in the people of God are your greatest assets in your children coming to Christ. So try not to cling to them when they are ready to experience the rest of the body of Christ. It will be your best friend in child discipleship if they experience the love of Christ through a variety of personalities and gifts within the body of Christ. Sunday at church can be an essential time for this to begin through Sunday School especially, but also just through interactions with others before and after worship. But again, don’t underestimate the power of a godly Sunday School teacher in your child’s life. Personally, I believe my children’s experience of the body of Christ over the years has as much to do with their own adult professions of faith as anything I can think of!

IN Conclusion:

It is the joyful privilege and policy at CPC to welcome our children to participate in the covenantal worship of God, knowing full well that they are covenant children and that they will grow into worship much like they will grow into Christ. We are convinced that we love our children more, and we make them stumble less in their journey to Christ if we encourage their participation in covenant worship at the earliest age possible, making allowance for their stages of development as to not exasperate them with the help of child care. A parent will discover that as their children mature, they will be able more and more to sit with them in worship. There are different times in the worship that a parent will find it most appropriate to take their child to child care when needed so as not to exasperate them. But through successive steps toward full participation in worship, we believe our children are taking successive steps toward full participation in Christ.

ON final observation: WE have discovered over the years, especially those of us who have participated in youth and college ministry that children who grow up worshipping God with adults are less prone to discard God as “childish” when they are ready to become adults. IN other words, when a child participates in worship with their parents, again, if nothing else, even as they fail to understand many things, they do understand that God is waiting for them when they are ready to become adults. WE ought to judge therefore the success of this policy less by what a child says when they are still “childish” and more by the final result that is measured over the long haul. WE need to be patient—like in many things related to child discipleship, we don’t measure the success of our parenting by the immediate here and now—we measure by the long term of the “Now and not yet.”

And so, may the Lord bless you and your children, may he persevere you and your child, and may he make his face to shine upon you and your children, even as this is nowhere more expressed and executed than in the corporate covenant renewal pattern of worship together with God’s people on earth as it is in heaven!

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