



Altus Reformed Baptist Church

We are unashamedly reformed. Which means that we hold the 5 Solas of the reformation to be the wheel that is foundational for the life of every Christian and therefore the church.

Sola Scriptura is the primary means of grace that God has given to His church. Through it, we know that Christ died for the church, Ephesians 5:25, and that we are to live for the church, 1 Corinthians 12.

God alone regulates the polity of His church, which means that when He tells us; *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* Ephesians 6:1 We are expected to teach and obey this truth in our church and in our family, and so we do.

Our church is what is called “family integrated”, meaning that we do not separate our children from worship services, we do not and will not have a nursery, or a kids wing, we do this for the sole purpose of the Glory of God in His church. This was the theological stance that our church was founded on. For the first year and a half, it was theoretical, we had teenagers and even some younger kids but no families with little children. Until recently.

The Lord has blessed our body with children, lots of children. And now our church is truly family integrated, and it has come with some growing pains. This letter is being written to address those pains and hopefully cause us to check our hearts a bit.

Kids make it hard to concentrate during worship: There are times that small children will make noise, lots of noise and this can be distracting. How are we, who no longer have small children to deal with this distraction?

Remember.

Remember what it was like when your children were that age and you kept them in service. Except, you probably did not keep them in service. If you were a member of a church, you more than likely sent them off to the babysitting wing. And there are lots of us that just weren't members of a church during this time.

Remember, and show them grace. Not just for the parents sake, but for your own. Jesus was especially fond of those little balls of compressed energy that have not yet learned to act in socially acceptable ways, all the time. He stated in Matthew 19:14 *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*



Altus Reformed Baptist Church

And He also said to us in 1 John 4:20 *"If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."* You may not think that you are hating your neighbor as you sit in that pew, upset and angry at the parents of that youngster who is making it impossible for you to hear the sermon or sing, but once again the Lord instructed us that to be angry with someone in our heart without cause is the same sin as murder, Matthew 5:22

Pray.

Prayer is an amazing gift from God to His children. Through it, we align our hearts more to His will and become more conformed into His image. Through prayer, sin is revealed in our hearts, through prayer we are allowed to watch God perform miracles, through prayer we come to know our Lord to a greater degree.

In Matthew 5, verses 44-48, Jesus gives us the answer to the dilemma that this letter is addressing, there He commands us; *But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

He is the One who has answered your prayer for Him to build His church by bringing these young families into it. He is the One who knows how best —you and they are to bring glory to God. And He knows that you cannot hate or despise the person that you are praying for.

Move.

I know, this is crossing some very strict Baptist boundaries, but moving forward or to another part of the sanctuary may allow you to be able to hear and participate better, and you will be given the chance to hear different people worshipping along side of you and interact with them during the service.



Altus Reformed Baptist Church

Love.

As most of our members who have small children know, there is a learning curve for the little ones to get used to sitting quietly during worship. During this time, more often than not, the parents are embarrassed and possibly could be questioning their decision to join this church, since this adjustment period is just hard.

If you are a person that is gifted with children, ask these parents if you can help in the training process. Get to know the little ones so that they trust you and then help the parents in guiding and training them. Let them know the truth, we love the noise that little kids make during service, that the noise is bothering them more than it is the family that they have covenanted with. This is what families are, they are alive, sometimes noisy and full of energy.

For the parents of little children:

If you are that new family here, or if you are considering attending and perhaps joining this church but have little ones and know that your children can be very loud and distracting at times, what can you do?

First, and you will hear this stated many times in this church, question everything. Especially what is the social norm of parenting- even within the church.

We very often live as if there is no such thing as history. It was not that long ago that children were taught differently than they are now. The generation that has been called 'the greatest generation that has ever lived'; that generation grew up under the mantra; 'children should be seen and not heard'.

Much of the parenting style that is being propagated today, even from within the church is not Christian.

We parent as if the truth of original sin is not factual.

We act like and believe that what children need to be happy is more fun, more self esteem, more ease and comfort and more sugar. This is anti biblical and is detrimental to the spiritual growth of children.

Since you desire that the Lord would call your children as His own, and you would like to see this happen sooner rather than later, teach them the truth.

Reveal to them their sinfulness in being selfish. Use biblical words in training them up. Instead of telling them; 'that was bad or wrong' tell them; 'that was sin.' And then expect them to confess and repent.



Altus Reformed Baptist Church

In doing so, you are laying the groundwork for them to do the same thing, when the Lord opens their heart to the this truth concerning Him.

Pray.

Ask the Lord to reveal His wisdom— through His word to you in how you are to train up your children. Knowing that when your child learns to listen and obey you, you are training them to later submit and obey the Lord- when the Lord answers your prayer to call them His own.

Learn the difference between obedience and compliance. Our society hates God, and this truth has filtered into what it socially acceptable for parental training. Timeouts, counting, repeating commands (or making suggestions instead of giving commands).

These are all anti- biblical and worldly. God is clear that children are to obey their parents as quoted at the beginning of this letter from Ephesians 6:1, children are also to honor their father and mother as Ephesians 6:2 quotes from the 10 commandments.

Disciple.

That is what you are doing mom and dad. You are making disciples, which is the best means to spread the Gospel locally. Instead of looking at the task of raising your children as a chore, decide that you are going to look at it as what it is- a gift from God to you.

Those children while they are yours biologically, are a gift from God to you. Those children are His, on loan to you.

Begin training early... really early. God has given humans the amazing capacity to learn and develop quickly. Even from early infancy, you can sleep train your baby, you can train them to learn patience by not immediately responding every time that they fuss, you can teach them to self entertain by expecting them to play quietly as you do other things in the house.

Prepare.

Begin at home to prepare them for Sunday worship. Practice having them sit quietly or join you, as you read the Word, or sing hymns, Psalms and spiritual songs.

Start with short amounts of time and then increase the time that they are sitting quietly to include quiet activities.



Altus Reformed Baptist Church

Ask.

In the end, we the members of this church, desire for you to know that we love you with true Christian love and are here to help you. You should not feel embarrassed to ask for help, embarrassed to ask for advice. It is always easy to look around at others whose children are better behaved and think that they are judging you. This is not the case here.

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Children are not easy, but they do come with an instruction manual, it is the Bible.

It is our desire for you to enjoy your children from an early age and through out their entire lives. This is the design of God for families and it is possible. If you train up your children early to respect, honor and obey, you are paving the way for your family to be a joyous and God glorifying one- even through the teenage years.

You can do this. We are here to help you do this... all for the glory of God alone.