



**CENTRAL JAMAICA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS  
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MINISTRIES  
FAMILY TOGETHERNESS WEEK OF PRAYER AND UNITY  
September 5-11, 2026**

**SERMON 2**

**TOPIC:        The Fire Must Never Go Out: Rebuilding the Family Altar**

**The Impact of Family Worship on Family Togetherness**

**Main Text: Deuteronomy 6:4–9**

4. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: <sup>5</sup> And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. <sup>6</sup> And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: <sup>7</sup> And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. <sup>8</sup> And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. <sup>9</sup> And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

**Supporting Text: Joshua 24:15**

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

**Introduction**

**The Greatest Crisis Is Not Outside the Home; It Is Inside It.**

We live in an age of unprecedented technological advancement, yet unprecedented family fragmentation.

Homes are larger than ever, but hearts are farther apart from each other. Big houses but little togetherness among family members.



Families communicate through text messages while sitting in the same living room. The cell phone has become the most sought-after gadget in the home. Parents provide expensive gifts but often lack meaningful conversations with their children.

Children have countless online friends but few spiritual mentors. Marriages are strained by endless schedules, financial pressures, social media, and emotional distance, and divorce is on an all-time rise, even in Jamaica, the *land we love*. **The modern home is under siege.**

Statistics consistently reveal increases in divorce, anxiety among children and adolescents, loneliness, domestic conflict, and spiritual decline. While these challenges have many causes, one common thread runs through many struggling Christian homes: **the disappearance of the family altar.**

Many Christian families faithfully attend church every Sabbath but seldom gather before God together during the week. This is a tragedy in the SDA Home. The television is switched on every evening. Phones are charged daily. Laptops are updated regularly. But Bibles remain closed, and family worship becomes an occasional event instead of a practice that is central to family togetherness.

The greatest loss is not merely the absence of worship, but it is the absence of God's presence at the centre of family life.

When the family altar disappears, something else takes its place. Entertainment fills the void and the emptiness. Busyness replaces fellowship. Carl Jung once wrote, “Hurry is not of the devil; it is the devil.” Individualism replaces family togetherness.



The home slowly becomes a collection of individuals sharing an address rather than a family sharing a mission in Christ Jesus.

### **God's Mandate for the Family Altar**

From the beginning, God intended parents to be the spiritual leaders of their homes.

In **Deuteronomy 6:6–7**, Moses instructed Israel:

"These commandments...shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..."

We notice in the Scripture text that the responsibility was given first to parents, not priests, prophets, or teachers.

Faith was to be taught:

1. while sitting in the house,
2. while walking,
3. while lying down,
4. while rising up in the mornings

In other words, worship was to become a lifestyle and a central aspect of the Israelite home.

Throughout the Old Testament, the altar became the visible symbol of a family's relationship with God. Whenever God's people settled in a new place, one of the first things they built was an altar.

The altar represented:

1. surrender to God,
2. worship to Yahweh,
3. communion with God,
4. thanksgiving for his victories,
5. dependence upon the Lord for all their needs.



## **Men and Women Who Took the Family Altar Seriously**

1. **Noah** built an altar immediately after leaving the ark (Genesis 8:20).
2. **Abraham** built altars throughout Canaan wherever he journeyed (Genesis 12:7–8).
3. **Isaac** built an altar at Beersheba and called upon the Lord (Genesis 26:25).
4. **Jacob** rebuilt the altar at Bethel after leading his household to put away their idols (Genesis 35:1–7).
5. **Job** regularly offered sacrifices on behalf of his children, saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned" (Job 1:5).
6. And Joshua publicly declared, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

These leaders understood that before a family could stand strong before people, it had to kneel together before God in total surrender to Him.

Ellen G. White tells us

**"In every family there should be a fixed time for morning and evening worship. How appropriate it is for parents to gather their children about them before the fast is broken, to thank the heavenly Father for His protection during the night, and ask Him for His help and guidance during the day."** (*Child Guidance*, p. 520)

The strength of the Christian family has always been measured not by its wealth or education, but by the presence of God at its altar.

Today, we will discover three powerful ways in which family worship strengthens family togetherness.



## **1. Family Worship Creates Spiritual Unity**

### **Text: Deuteronomy 6:6–9**

<sup>6</sup> And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

<sup>7</sup> And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

<sup>8</sup> And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

<sup>9</sup> And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

The greatest bond in any family is not the bond of blood. It is Christ Jesus.

Family worship places every member of the family under the authority of God's Word.

Children hear the same promises.

Parents receive the same correction.

Everyone kneels before the same Saviour.

When families worship together, they develop a common spiritual identity.

Without worship in the home:

- 1. everyone follows his own values**
- 2. everyone develops separate priorities,**
- 3. everyone pursues different goals.**

But worship reminds the family:

"We belong to God and God alone."

### **Listen to how Worship Builds Unity**

It establishes:

1. shared beliefs,
2. shared values,
3. shared prayers,
4. shared hope,
5. shared mission.



Instead of simply living together in a house, family members begin growing together in a home. Psalm 133:1 says: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Unity is not produced simply by living in the same house, but unity is produced by living under the same direction of our Lord.

Ellen White writes:

**"The sweetest type of heaven is a home where the Spirit of the Lord presides."**  
(*The Adventist Home*, p. 15)

## **2. Family Worship Strengthens Relationships Through Prayer**

### **Text: Ecclesiastes 4:12**

"....A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

The strongest homes are not those without problems. They are those that know how to pray through problems.

Prayer changes families.

It softens hearts.

It reduces pride.

It encourages forgiveness.

It replaces anxiety with peace.

Families who pray together discover that many arguments lose their importance in God's presence. It is difficult to remain angry with someone after sincerely praying for them.

### **Prayer Produces**

- empathy,
- patience,
- compassion,
- forgiveness,
- understanding.

When families stop praying together, they begin fighting alone.

Jesus taught:

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)



Imagine Christ sitting in your living room every morning and evening.

Ellen White beautifully says:

**"Those who would enjoy the love and blessing of God must pray together."**

*(The Adventist Home, p. 212)* - Prayer does not merely invite God into the home.

Prayer keeps the family together.

### **3. Family Worship Builds a Legacy That Lasts Generations**

**Text: Joshua 24:15**

Joshua declared:

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Notice this about Joshua:

He didn't leave worship to chance.

He made a decision.

Parents must know that they are writing tomorrow's spiritual story today; they are building a generation of faithfulness.

Children may forget many conversations.

They rarely forget watching Mom and Dad pray.

They remember hearing Scripture read around the table.

They remember family worship before bedtime.

Those moments shape eternity.

Family worship becomes a spiritual inheritance.

Timothy's faith began long before Paul met him.

It began in the home through Lois and Eunice, his mother and grandmother.

(2 Timothy 1:5)

Family worship creates disciples, not merely church members.



## The Legacy of Worship

Children learn:

- how to pray,
- how to trust God,
- how to forgive,
- how to love,
- how to serve.

The family altar becomes the training ground for heaven.

Psalm 78 reminds parents to teach God's mighty works "to the generation to come."

Our greatest inheritance is not property.

It is faith.

Ellen White reminds us:

**"The home should be the children's first school, where they learn to love and fear God."**  
(*The Adventist Home*, p. 182)

## Conclusion

### Rekindle the Fire on the Altar

In Leviticus 6:13 God instructed Israel:

"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out."

The fire represented God's continual presence.

Today that fire is the spiritual life of the family.

Sadly, in many homes...

the fire has become ashes.

The family altar has been replaced by television.

Prayer has been replaced by scrolling.

Bible study has been replaced by entertainment.

Yet God still calls His people to rebuild.



Just as Elijah repaired the broken altar on Mount Carmel before fire fell from heaven (1 Kings 18:30–38), many families today need to repair the broken altar in their homes. Revival in the church often begins with revival in the home, and revival in the home begins with worship.

Ellen G. White writes:

**"If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now."**

*(The Adventist Home, p. 212)*

The future of our children depends less on what we own than on what we practice. A home where God's Word is opened, prayers are offered, hymns are sung, and hearts are united around Christ becomes a refuge in a troubled world.

When the family altar burns brightly:

1. communication improves,
2. forgiveness becomes easier,
3. love grows deeper,
4. faith becomes stronger,
5. children gain security,
6. marriages flourish,
7. and Christ is honored.

## **Appeal**

Today God is asking every family:

**Will you rebuild the family altar?**

Not tomorrow.

Not next week or next year.

But today!

If your family has never had regular worship, begin with ten minutes each morning or evening. Read a passage of Scripture. Sing a hymn. Share a prayer. Involve every member of the household. Consistency is more important than length.

Parents, become the priests and spiritual shepherds of your homes.

Mothers, nurture an atmosphere where Christ is welcomed daily.

Children and young people, join your parents around the altar with willing hearts.

Imagine the transformation if every family represented here recommitted itself to daily worship.

Homes would become stronger, relationships healthier, children more secure, and our churches more



vibrant because they would be filled with families whose faith is lived every day, not only every Sabbath.

As Joshua declared long ago, let it become the declaration of every household today:

**"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."**

May the fire on the family altar never go out. May our homes become places where Christ dwells, love abounds, and families grow together in faith until we worship together forever in God's eternal kingdom.