

## **Sunday Evening Prayer Service**

Our monthly prayer services are another good opportunity to teach our children how to pray together. Nursery is provided during the entire service for those ages 0-3. Parents are encouraged to help children ages 3-kindergarten pray in the service for as long as possible. When your family decides that a child in this age group is in need of it, a volunteer will be available in the gym to care for your child. Children 1<sup>st</sup> grade and above can be expected to participate in most, if not all, of the prayer service. Be encouraged! God is pleased in our efforts to teach our children to worship him and talk with him through prayer.

# The Family Together in God's Presence

*Transitioning your child to the worship service*

Each Sunday is a time to joyfully gather together as we worship God and learn from His Word. It's a special day – different from all the others – and an excellent opportunity to teach our children about the One we serve.

To that end, we have established three transition stages to help families worship together. Keep in mind that these are simply guidelines and information regarding ways we can serve your family. If your family chooses to begin the transition earlier, we fully support you.

### **I: Nursery (ages 0-3)**

The nursery is available for all children ages 0-3 years during the full length of the service. Most children this age are unable to fully participate in the service, and many parents are better able to do so while their very small children are in the good care of others. Families are encouraged to decide at some point during the third year when a child is ready to join Children's Church.

### **II: Children's Church (3 years – Kindergarten)**

Children's Church dismisses about halfway through the service. In this way, your child learns to worship God through music and pray corporately with you. Children 3 years old through Kindergarten then join in the preschool room to learn from the bible at their level, do a hands-on project, and often enjoy a small snack.

### **III: Full Family Worship (beginning in 1<sup>st</sup> grade)**

By 1<sup>st</sup> grade, children can be expected to join in the full church service. And, contrary to popular belief, not *everything* will go over their heads! Here are a few tips from Noel Piper in "Treasuring God in Our Traditions":

#### *Before the service:*

- Talk about your favorite parts of the service or what might be special about the upcoming church service (a musical solo, a guest speaker, etc).
- If you know the scripture passage that the pastor will be speaking on, read it with your child beforehand and talk about what he/she thinks the pastor might say.
- Make sure your child has a pen and something to write on during the church service – and get in a trip to the bathroom beforehand if possible!
- Finally, discuss your expectations for your child during the coming worship service.

#### *During the service:*

- Allow any child who would like a worship folder to have one.
- Once the sermon begins, encourage your child to take notes. This will grow with your child. At first, she may draw a picture of something she hears in the sermon. Later, a word or two; and finally, sentences that explain an idea she understood. You might also pick out a word you know will be said frequently in the sermon and have your child make a check mark each time he hears it. You can also show him the Scripture passage for the morning and have him copy a few words or sentences of it in her notes. Before you might even expect it, he might be outlining the whole sermon in his notes!
- Enjoy the experience of learning *together*.

#### *After the service:*

- Praise a child who did well during the church service!
- At some point during the remainder of the day, make time to hear what your child learned – and share what you learned with your child.