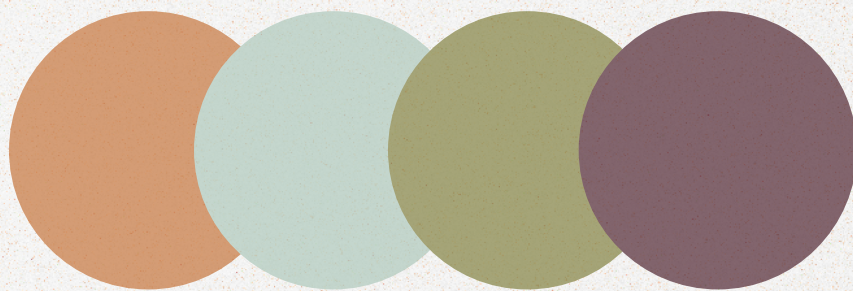


# *Family Discipleship*

The critically important and mostly ordinary work of  
leading your family as disciples of Jesus.



# What's inside

<p><b>0</b> This is your work <i>There are no programs, curriculum, or series that will disciple your family for you, as effectively you can..</i></p>	<p><b>01</b> Model <i>Your family doesn't need a perfect parent. They need one who is pursuing God.</i></p>
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A WORD TO BEGIN

# *This is your work*

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No program, curriculum, or series will disciple your family as effectively as you can. The work belongs to you, and it's the most important work you'll ever do.

Revival of the home begins with individuals who are genuinely pursuing God and who intentionally bring their family with them.

The good news is that you're more equipped for it than you think. God doesn't call you to be a perfect parent or a perfect spouse; He calls you to be a pursuing one. Someone who is genuinely following Jesus, and doing it with your family.

*“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”*

— *Deuteronomy 6:6–7*

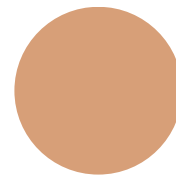
Deuteronomy 6 is one of the oldest and most enduring calls to family discipleship in all of Scripture. And notice what God asks for: not a formal class, not a structured curriculum, but a life saturated with love for God, spoken about naturally, in the ordinary rhythm of the day.

That's what this booklet is about. Four words to frame it: Model. Time. Moments. Milestones. Simple enough to remember. Rich enough to last a lifetime.

***This resource is inspired by Matt Chandler and Adam Griffin's excellent book, 'Family Discipleship' (Crossway, 2020), especially their framework of Time, Moments, and Milestones.***

*It has also been shaped by several other helpful parenting and discipleship resources, including The Intentional Father, Habits of the Household, Taking Charge of ADHD, Raising Emotionally Strong Boys, and Loving Our Kids on Purpose. I've shortened, shaped, and contextualised the content, alongside my own reflection, prayer, teaching, and study, with the Highlands Church community in mind. I highly recommend parents read these books, along with other great resources, for a fuller understanding.*

# Model



*Your family doesn't need a perfect parent. They need one who is pursuing God.*

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Every framework for family discipleship begins here, because everything else flows out of this: who are you becoming?

It's a confronting question – but a freeing one. Because God isn't asking you to be a finished product before you can lead your family spiritually. He's asking you to be honest, to be genuine, and to be moving.

Let your family see you in the Word. Let them hear you pray – the real kind, not just the perfect, polished and rehearsed kind before dinner. Let them know when you're wrestling something out with God. Let them watch you fail and repent. Let your spouse and your kids see what it looks like when a person's life is genuinely shaped by their faith.

The most powerful discipleship in your home might simply be your kids watching you and thinking: "whatever they've got, I want that."

## *Two qualities every Godly model needs*

### **1. Reliability – repentant integrity**

Your children and your spouse are watching not just what you do, but how you respond when you get it wrong. A parent who owns their mistakes, says sorry when it's hard, and asks for forgiveness – is teaching something profound about the gospel.

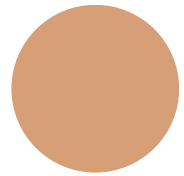
You don't need to be consistent in the sense of always getting it right. You can, though, aim to be consistent in the sense of always coming back to God, to love and to the truth.

### **2. Relatability – relational proximity**

You can't model a life for people you don't know. Discipleship happens in proximity. That means knowing your children – how they think, what they fear, what makes them light up, what they carry.

The parent who knows their child deeply has enormous spiritual influence. Not because they've earned it through their effective behaviour management, but because they've earned it through love.

# Model



*Your family doesn't need a perfect parent. They need one who is pursuing God.*

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## THIS WEEK'S CHARGE

Let someone in your family see you doing something that shows your faith is real – praying, reading the bible, share what you are processing with God, honestly and what you sense He is leading you towards.

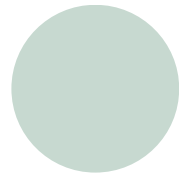
### *What modeling isn't*

It's not performance. You're not trying to give your family a polished image of what a Christian looks like. You're trying to give them a real one.

Some parents avoid spiritual conversation because they feel like hypocrites – they're not sure they believe strongly enough, they're not sure they've got it together enough. The answer isn't to wait until you do, but to bring your family into the real journey.

Authenticity is the most disarming thing you can offer your children. It's what makes your faith believable to them. And it's what the Bible actually asks for: a heart turned toward God, and a life that doesn't hide it.

# Time



*Intentional rhythm built into the normal flow of life.*

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The second element of family discipleship is time – the regular, on-purpose space you build into your week for the things that matter most.

Church together. Bible reading. Prayer moments. God-and-life conversations. Making room for God – not just in theory, but actually in your schedule.

Here's the most important thing to hear about Time: don't aim for intensity. Aim for consistency.

*“Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to teaching... Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.”*

*— 1 Timothy 4:13, 15*

Paul's words to Timothy are a picture of steady, daily formation. Not a one-off event. Not an intense season. A life immersed in the things of God.

That's what you're building in your home when you protect a regular time.

## *Starting well*

Lower your expectations. I know that sounds strange in a resource about family discipleship. But the initial goal is not a 'super-engaged', enthusiastic family devotional time that could rival the last night of a youth camp. The primary goal is actually just showing up, again and again, until the rhythm becomes part of who your family is.

Skipping one day or one week leads to two. Two leads to three. The rhythms of our homes are built by small decisions made consistently over the years.

Start with what you can sustain. Five minutes of Bible and prayer at the dinner table one or two nights a week is far better than a 45-minute structured study you abandon after a month.

# Time



*Intentional rhythm built into the normal flow of life.*

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## *Building your family rhythm*

**Some ideas for you to consider**

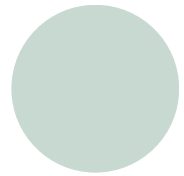
### Daily

- Pray with your children before sleep – brief, real, personal.
- Pray with your spouse – even one sentence together reshapes the posture of a household.
- Let them see your own time with God – Bible reading, journaling, quiet prayer, in a public room of the home.
- Bless your children as they leave for school or before bed, bless your spouse before they leave for the day – a hand on the head or shoulder and a simple, short prayer. “We don’t leave this house – we are sent by God and in prayer”

### Weekly

- Church together - This is the non-negotiable anchor. Protect it from sports, activities, and the creep of busyness. Debrief together after every church activity: Service, Youth, Kids church – anything Godly that you attend, tell your family about it and ask questions about their activity.
- One regular family devotional time – a verse, a question, a prayer. Pick a time and protect it.
- Reflect on the week that has gone by and preview the week to come. Take time to be thankful and to pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and bless you with the things to come.

# Time



*Intentional rhythm built into the normal flow of life.*

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## Monthly (at least)

- Serve together as a family – give generously, help a neighbour, volunteer at church.
- Check in on your rhythm: is it working? What needs adjusting?

## Seasonally

- Mark the milestones: birthdays, baptisms, transitions, answered prayers.
- Take stock together of what God has done in your family over the year.

### THIS WEEK'S CHARGE

**Work on your rhythm.** Pick one regular time this week and protect it – even if it's five minutes. Consistency is the goal.

**Remember:** skipping once is human. Skipping twice is a pattern. Protect the rhythm.

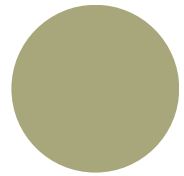
## *A note on screen time*

The greatest enemy of family rhythm is not a lack of desire – most parents deeply want to build this. The enemy is the fullness of life. Sport fixtures. Homework. Devices. Entertainment. Exhaustion.

Family discipleship requires making a choice about what your home is for. Not necessarily abandoning activities but definitely ordering them. Deciding that some things come first.

This is one of the most counter-cultural things a Christian family can do. And it is one of the most powerful.

# Moments



*Paying attention to everyday life and connecting it back to God.*

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Some of the best discipleship in your home will never be planned. It'll happen in the car after a hard day. At the dinner table, when someone says something unexpectedly honest. In the middle of a conflict. In the silence after something difficult.

You're not waiting for the perfect moment to sit your family down. You're simply paying attention to everyday life and connecting it back to God. When you do, ordinary moments become extraordinary ones.

*“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”*

— *Colossians 4:5–6*

That same principle applies inside the home. Walk in wisdom. Make the best use of the time. Be ready to answer – with grace, with honesty, with God in view.

## *What moments teach*

Family discipleship moments are really about two things: the character of God, and the character He's calling us to.

### **Who is God?**

What has He done? What is He doing? What is He like? Moments give you opportunities to answer these questions in real life, not just in formal Bible study.

Your child is disappointed – that's a conversation about hope, resilience or even the goodness of God in the midst of pain. Your family receives unexpected generosity – that's a conversation about grace. You see suffering in the news – that's a conversation about lament, justice, and hope.

### **Who are we?**

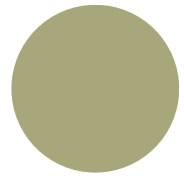
Who has God called us to be? What has He asked of us? How do we become more like Him?

If your kids fight – that's a live lesson on repentance, forgiveness, and grace. Someone is unkind at school – that's a conversation about identity and what we do with hurt. An opportunity to serve or be generous arises – get the whole family in on it and talk about how the Spirit leads us toward others.

# Moments

*Paying attention to everyday life and connecting it back to God.*

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## *Being ready*

You can't script the moments, but you can be ready for them. Two things help:

- **Know your people.** A parent who knows their child well recognises a moment when it comes. Like an unusually distracted or withdrawn child. A tense and quiet dinner. Hearing a question that seems small, but you know, it isn't.
- **Ask good questions.** If you're not sure how to speak into moments, know this: questions open doors, lectures close them. "What do you think about that?" and "How did that make you feel?" and "I wonder what God says about that" are all you need sometimes.

## THIS WEEK'S CHARGE

**Work on your responses.** A moment will come this week. Be ready to respond with grace and insight rather than just reaction.

When something hard, surprising, or beautiful happens – pause. Ask: what does this show us about God? What does this call us to?

Ask those questions or try sharing your thoughts with your family.

# Moments



*Paying attention to everyday life and connecting it back to God.*

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## *Conversation starters to keep in your back pocket*

These questions work at the dinner table, in the car, or in any quiet moment. Use them freely.

### **Faith and God**

- What's something you noticed this week that made you think about God?
- If you could ask God one question right now, what would it be?
- What's one thing you're thanking God for this week, and one thing you need His help with?

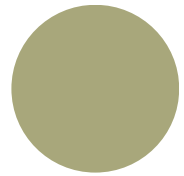
### **Hard moments**

- When something hard happens, is it easy or hard for you to trust God? Why?
- When you feel like you've failed at something, what do you think God thinks of you in that moment?

### **Character and who we're becoming**

- Is there someone you need to forgive this week? What makes that hard?
- If Jesus were walking with you at school this week, what do you think He would have said or done differently?
- Is there someone around us who needs help or kindness right now? How could we do something about it?

# Milestones



*Marking and making moments that carry meaning across a lifetime.*

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Beyond the ordinary rhythms of Model, Time, and Moments, there is a fourth dimension of family discipleship that we don't want to neglect: **milestones**.

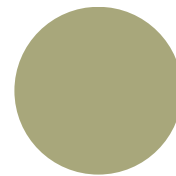
Some milestones we mark, like significant moments that naturally occur in life: a birthday, a baptism, a child leaving home. These deserve to be received with intention, not just let slide by.

Some milestones we make. These are deliberate moments we create to commemorate spiritual growth, to affirm identity, to build a family history of God's faithfulness.

*"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power,  
and the wonders he has done."*

*— Psalm 78:4*

# Milestones



*Marking and making moments that carry meaning across a lifetime.*

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## *Milestones to mark*

When these moments come, slow down and make something of them.

### **Baptism**

Make a day of it. Invite people. Celebrate publicly. Let your family member know this is one of the most significant moments of their life – and that your family will always remember it.

### **Gifting the Bible**

Present it with intention. Write in the cover. Explain what it is. Pray over them. Don't let it just appear on a shelf.

### **Starting school**

Pray over them. Speak identity over them: you are loved, known, and sent. Commission them, in a real sense, for the mission field of the playground.

### **Coming of age**

At 12 or 13, consider a rite of passage – a special conversation, an affirming letter, a gathering of people who speak into their life. Mark the transition from childhood to youth with intention and spiritual weight.

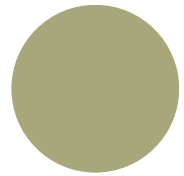
### **Leaving home**

Don't let it be swallowed by logistics. Bless them. Pray over them. Speak words of faith about who they are and what God has for them. Send them with intention.

### **Answered prayer**

When God comes through – name it. Write it down. Return to it across the years. Build a family history of His faithfulness that your children can point back to when they're in a season of doubt.

# Milestones



*Marking and making moments that carry meaning across a lifetime.*

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## *Milestones to make*

### **An annual family blessing**

At the start of the year, or at each person's birthday, gather and speak. Share what you see God doing. Read Scripture over them. Pray intentionally for the year ahead.

### **Your testimony, retold**

Tell your children your story of faith – not once, but repeatedly across their childhood. Let it grow in the telling. Make your story part of theirs.

### **A household act of service**

Create a regular practice of serving together beyond yourselves – and mark it when you've been doing it for a year. Celebrate what God has done through your household.

## THIS MONTHS CHARGE

Write down three moments in your family's story where you clearly saw God at work. Share them at dinner.

**Then ask:** what do we want our family to remember about this year? What has God done?

# *Your marriage matters*

*The covenant at the centre of your household shapes everything else.*

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Family discipleship doesn't solely focus on your children. It importantly focuses on and starts with your marriage.

The covenant relationship between a husband and wife is the spiritual foundation of a household. How you love each other, how you forgive each other, how you pursue God together – this shapes the atmosphere your children grow up in, more than almost anything else.

*“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...”*

*— Ephesians 5:25*

Ephesians 5 gives us a picture of marriage, for both husbands and wives, that is breathtaking in its scope: a relationship modelled on the love of Christ for His people. Sacrificial. Unconditional. Pursuing. Enduring.

You don't have to have a perfect marriage to disciple your children, but you do need to be working on it – honestly, humbly, with God in view.

## *Practical steps for your marriage*

- **Pray together** - Even briefly, even awkwardly. Couples who pray together build something no communication technique can replicate.
- **Read Scripture together** – even separately and then share what you noticed. Build a shared spiritual language.
- **Public repentance** - Let your children see you apologise to each other. A parent who says, “I was wrong, I'm sorry”, is doing extraordinary discipleship.
- **Talk about God between the two of you** – what He's doing, what you're struggling to trust, where you've seen His hand. Make faith a normal conversation.
- **Protect Sundays together** - Church is a rhythm, not an event. Guard it.
- **Serve alongside each other in something beyond yourselves** - A household pointed outward grows together.
- **Get honest about where you each are spiritually** - Not to fix each other – but to pursue God together.

# *Your marriage matters*

*The covenant at the centre of your household shapes everything else.*

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## *A word to single parents*

This chapter is called "Your Marriage Matters" and if you're reading it as someone parenting alone, you might have felt the sting of that heading before you even got to the first line. This section is for you.

First, the thing that needs to be said plainly: you are not a lesser version of what this booklet describes. You are not doing a reduced form of family discipleship. What a child sees in a parent who is pursuing God through genuinely hard circumstances is one of the most powerful pictures of faith they will ever witness.

The framework still holds. Model, Time, Moments, Milestones. But the shape of it will look different, and it's worth noting that, honestly.

### **The weight is real**

Single parenting is exhausting in a way that is difficult to describe to someone who hasn't done it. You carry the decisions, the discipline, the income, the emotional load, the school pickups and the bedtime prayers, often without another in the house to share any of that load with. The capacity you feel that you have at the end of a day to sit with your child and open a Bible or spend time praying with them could often be close to zero.

So, before anything practical, remember: a small step is still meaningful movement. A two-sentence prayer over a sleeping child is beautiful. A short conversation in the car still forms. Reading your Bible (or listening to an audio Bible) at the kitchen table while they eat breakfast still counts. You don't need to engineer your own family devotional from scratch; just keep showing up and taking small steps of faith, small steps of action in whatever form needed on a given day.

### **You are not the only adult in their story**

One of the gifts you can give your children is a wider circle of spiritual influence. Your church community, a trusted small group, godparents, youth leaders, older men and women in the Church or your family. These people can help in various ways for your children that you might not feel that you can do alone. Utilising those people for discipleship would be wise. Be intentional about who speaks into your children's lives. Invite those people in. Let your kids be known by adults who love Jesus. The family of God is built from the families within it, and it exists to support every one of them.

# *Your marriage matters*

*The covenant at the centre of your household shapes everything else.*

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## *A word to single parents*

### **On the co-parenting reality**

If your children move between two homes, family discipleship rhythm becomes genuinely complicated. You can't control what happens in the other household, and trying to will exhaust you. What you can do is be faithful in the time you have. Build your rhythms around your days. Pray for your children on the days they're not with you. Trust that God's reach into their lives is not limited by a custody arrangement.

### **The model you are**

There is something your children will understand, if you let them: that faith is not just a fair-weather thing. It is something all parents want to reveal to their children – that God is not only present in easy, comfortable or 'ideal' circumstances. That the person pursuing Jesus in the middle of hardship, loneliness, or exhaustion, and still choosing to joyfully and faithfully follow Jesus, is someone worth following the example of.

You are not doing this alone. The Holy Spirit is present in your home, the church is here to get around you and the work you are doing matters more than you know.

# *Practical ideas by stage*

*What family discipleship can look like from birth to leaving home.*

---

Every stage of a child's life calls for a different expression of family discipleship. The principles don't change – but the form does.

## *Little ones (0–5)*

You are building a foundation. They absorb more than you think.

- Pray with them at bedtime. Keep it simple. Let them hear you thank God for them.
- Read a children's Bible as part of the bedtime routine. Consistency matters more than length.
- Sing worship songs in the car and around the house.
- When they ask, "Who made that?" – the sky, a bug, a sunset – pause and answer: God did.
- Let them see you read your Bible or pray. You don't need to explain it.
- Walk them through saying sorry when they hurt someone. Model what repentance and forgiveness look like.
- Bless them before school or sleep – a hand on the head and a simple prayer.

## *Primary school age (6–11)*

They're asking real questions now. Answer them honestly.

- Start a simple family devotional – a verse, a question, a prayer. Five minutes is enough.
- Let them hear you work through a real struggle with God: "I'm praying about this."  
Authenticity teaches.
- Ask what they're learning at church or kids' ministry and go deeper. Be curious about their faith.
- Memorise a verse together. Put it on the fridge. Return to it across the week.
- When they face conflict, use it – talk about what Jesus says about forgiveness and what it costs.
- Do an act of service together and debrief: "Why does God ask us to do this?"
- Let them lead a prayer at dinner. Give them space and low expectations on their prayer length, content or style.

# *Practical ideas by stage*

*What family discipleship can look like from birth to leaving home.*

---

Every stage of a child's life calls for a different expression of family discipleship. The principles don't change – but the form does.

## *Teenagers (12+)*

They need you to be honest more than they need you to be right.

- Share your own faith journey honestly – including the hard parts. Teens trust authenticity over performance.
- Read a book of the Bible together over a few weeks. Ask each other what stood out.
- Invite them into your prayer life for something real – a decision, a difficulty.
- When culture raises big questions – identity, sexuality, justice, purpose – engage with Scripture and discussion together. Don't avoid them.
- Protect experiences that build their faith: youth group, camps, serving together. Don't let busyness crowd them out.
- Ask more questions. Curiosity invites them in; lectures shut the door.
- Share what God is teaching you right now. Make your faith visible and ongoing.

TO CLOSE

# *You have everything you need.*

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This week, you have access to all four of these.

You can model by letting your family see something real about your walk with God.

You can create time by protecting one moment this week for your family and God.

You can be ready for the moments by paying attention, asking good questions, and connecting everyday life back to the God who is in it.

You can prepare for the milestones to come by choosing at least one moment upcoming that you want to mark with greater significance and plan how you will include God at that time.

You don't need to have it all together. You don't need a theology degree. You don't need to be further along than you are. You just need to be moving toward God and toward the people He has given you to love and steward.

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

— *Joshua 24:15*

That declaration was made by a man at the end of a long life of following God through everything that was thrown at him, and it is your declaration to make today. Not as a promise of perfection, but as an orientation of the household. A direction of travel.

Model. Time. Moments. Milestones. That's your framework.

Now go and do the critically important, mostly ordinary work of family discipleship.

## Further Reading

Family Discipleship – Adam Griffin & Chad Harrington (Crossway, 2021)

[familydiscipleship.com](http://familydiscipleship.com)

[thevillagechurch.net/resources/series/family-discipleship](http://thevillagechurch.net/resources/series/family-discipleship)



**Highlands**