

FAMILY ALTAR LITURGY

Why a Family Altar?

Every home is built on something: noise, hurry, screens - or **intentional presence**.

A family altar is not a piece of furniture. It is a **pattern of meeting God together** - simple, repeatable, and rooted in Scripture.

This liturgy is designed to work in:

- Busy weekday evenings
- Early mornings before school
- Weekly "Family Night" slots

Aim for **15-20 minutes**. Consistency is more important than perfection.

Structure Overview

1. **Call to Attention (2 minutes)**
2. **Scripture Reading (5 minutes)**
3. **Conversation & Reflection (5-8 minutes)**
4. **Prayer & Blessing (5 minutes)**

You can adapt language to fit the age of your children.

1. Call to Attention

The leader (usually a parent) simply says:

> _"Let's come to the table. Phones down, TV off. This is our time before God as a family."_

Then a short call:

> **Leader:** "The Lord is our Shepherd."

> **Family:** "We will not fear."

You can choose any simple verse to repeat every time. Repetition builds memory.

2. Scripture Reading

Keep it short and clear. Examples:

- A Psalm (e.g. Psalm 23; Psalm 121)
- A short Gospel passage
- A story from Proverbs or the Gospels for younger children

Suggested pattern:

1. One person reads the passage slowly.
2. If children can read, let them take turns each night.
3. Repeat one key verse together.

Example:

> _"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."_ (Psalm 23:1)

3. Conversation & Reflection

Ask **simple, open questions**:

- _"What stood out to you?"_
- _"What does this tell us about God?"_
- _"What does this invite us to do or change?"_

Do not turn it into an exam. The aim is **heart engagement**, not perfect theology.

For younger children:

- _"Where do you see God being kind in this story?"_
- _"How can we show that same kindness this week?"_

You can end with one clear takeaway:

> _"Tonight's truth: God is our shepherd. He sees us, leads us, and provides for us."_

Write it on a sticky note and leave it somewhere visible.

4. Prayer & Blessing

A. Simple prayer pattern

Each person can complete one sentence:

- _"God, today I thank You for..."_
- _"God, please help me with..."_

Keep it short. Young children can simply say, _"Thank You Jesus for..."_

B. Blessing the children

The parent lays a hand on each child's shoulder or head (if appropriate) and says by name:

> _"[Name], the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace."_

(You can use Numbers 6:24-26 or a short personalised blessing.)

Weekly Rhythm Example

Monday: Psalm focus (comfort and trust)

Wednesday: Gospel story (character of Jesus)

Friday: Thanksgiving night (what God has done this week)

Sunday evening: Look ahead (school, work, major events)

The goal is not to manufacture perfection. The goal is to **anchor your home in the presence and Word of God**.

Start small. Stay consistent. Let the atmosphere of your home shift over time.