

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., *Senior Pastor*

Lesson 12: “Maintain Devotion”

Scriptures: Leviticus 6:13; Matthew 6:1-15; Deuteronomy 6; Psalm 119

Goal: To embrace and fulfill our covenant relationship with God and one another.

Objective:

- 1. To practice and apply secret and family devotion daily.**
- 2. To understand how maintaining family and secret devotion enhances our worship as a church family.**

Church Covenant Segment:

“We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion.”

Introduction

Jesus prayed for us to accept His invitation for oneness with Him and the Father, which unites us as family members to His earthly kingdom. *I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony. My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father—that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and the world will believe you sent me.”* (John 17:20,21 NLT)

Action speaks louder than words. Our faith in God and our genuine commitment to relationship with God is demonstrated in the way we maintain family and secret devotion. “Devotion unites form and fire as the means by which we remain in communion with God”.¹ Devotion deepens our commitment to our relationship with Christ. As we deepen our relationship with Christ, we deepen our relationship with others, which engages growth for love and unity for family.

God is faithful! It is impossible to set aside time for daily devotion and find yourself totally devastated and overwhelmed by the expected and unexpected trials in life. Daily prayer maintains a Christ consciousness. Prayer prepares you for whatever lies ahead. We know that we do not have to handle life’s situations alone. We have a faithful friend in Jesus! Jesus often modeled His commitment to prayer. *“And in the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”* (Mark 1:35)

¹ Turner, William C. (2002). *A Journey through the Church Covenant*. Valley Forge, PA. Judson Press, pg. 66

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor
Dialogue Web ~ Interactive Bible Lesson
Maintain Devotion

Maintaining family and secret devotion can take many forms. Regular prayer and communication to the LORD, whether it is with the family or in private as a secret devotion, is one powerful way of sustaining meaningful devotion. Daily reading and meditating upon Scripture is another fruitful way to maintain devotion. It is by God's Word that we come to know Him and the ways of the LORD, so that we might grow in relationship with Him and mature spiritually. Formal reading and reciting of prayers will not accomplish this if we are rushing through the reading as an exercise without a sincere desire to understand and apply its truths to our lives². Most important is time spent with the LORD and meaningfully reflecting and meditating upon the Word of God. Within the family unit, one might choose to select a particular Scripture a day or even for a week to discuss its meaning and applications during the course of daily living. Other suggestions are devotion times spent studying and reflecting upon Bible passages and/or reading from some good published devotionals such as *Drawing Near*³, *My Utmost for His Highest*⁴, or *Our Daily Bread*⁵. Time set aside to quietly listen for the *still small voice* of the Lord throughout the day can have a mighty impact on our lives and the course of events.

Practicing secret devotion is included in our church covenant. This is that special time spent alone with the LORD. Jesus said to enter your closet and pray unto the Father in secret. The Father who sees this in secret will reward thee openly [Matthew 6:6]. Secret devotion can be done anytime and anywhere, but the most important thing is that all distractions are eliminated. The focus is totally God-centered. Time can be spent in prayer, confessions, repentance, and thanksgiving. Worshiping, praising, and singing unto the LORD are other ways of expressing love and devotion to God. It is most important to spend some time listening to hear from God and to get to know His voice. He may have instructions for the day. Who will guide your day: God, the world, the flesh, or the devil? Why not God? You will never go wrong. Allow the peace and the power of God to sustain your days.

When we are on fire for the Lord at home it carries over to the church. Our private devotion fortifies and sustains us throughout the day. Devotion with our family protects our family and teaches our children the Scripture and how to pray. Teaching our family to pray is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children⁶. It creates a nurturing environment for the family. When we face difficult situations throughout the day we can reflect on the time we spent with the Lord easily recalling His promises given in His word. It also prepares us for church worship. We enter into His presence with our hearts ready to commune with God as a family of believers. Communion with God is our only source of strength⁷.

² Ibid, Turner, William C., pg. 68

³ MacArthur, John, *Drawing Near*, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1993

⁴ Chambers, Oswald, *My Utmost for His Highest*, Westwood, New Jersey: Dodd Mead & Co., 1935

⁵ *Our Daily Bread* (for Personal and Family Devotions) Grand Rapids, MI: RBC Ministries, Published quarterly

⁶ Turner, William C. (2002). *A Journey through the Church Covenant*. Valley Forge, PA. Judson Press, pg. 68

⁷ Ibid, Turner, William C., pg. 67

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

As you answer these guiding questions and discover what the Scriptures say about devotion recognize how devotion not only enhances our personal and family life, but also how it directly affects our worship on Sundays.

<i>Guiding Questions</i>	<i>What the Scripture Says</i>	<i>Class Discovery Points</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does daily devotion help us remain in communion with God and strengthen our faith? 2. What is the significance of leading the family in devotion? 3. Why is it important to have secret devotion with the Lord daily? 4. How does the family devotion enhance our worship at church? 	<p>John 17:20, 21 Leviticus 6:13 Ecc. 12:1</p> <p>I Cor. 7:14 Deu. 6: 6-7 Proverbs 23:24 NLT</p> <p>Matt 14:23 Matt 6:6 Mark 1:35</p> <p>1 Peter 3:1-21 1 Peter 3:8</p>	<p>Application (s) to the church.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4.

Class Summary Statement

Maintaining family and secret devotion is essential because...

Lesson Summary

Our Church Covenant serves to reinforce our need for family and secret devotion. Our participation should prompt reflections about individual and our family’s relationship and testimonies about what God has done in response to our prayers. The family’s commitment to devotion sustains the oneness in family relationships and the difference God makes as they come together in prayer. Jesus said, “*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*” Family devotion teaches our children to reverence God and draws the family closer. Secret devotion creates spiritual discipline “*But when you*

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

pray go into your room and when you have shut your door pray to your Father who is in the secret place and your Father who sees you in secret will reward you openly.” (Matthew 6:6)

Our faith in God is sustained by our family and secret devotion, because we maintain a consciousness of His relationship with us in the way He responds to our prayers and by what He says in His Word. Family devotion strengthens our collective ability to surrender and acknowledge God’s love and His will for our family. Our Heavenly Father is faithful and will manifest Himself to sustain our growth, faith and the closeness He wants us to experience with Him.

Going Deeper (Journal Writing)

1. In what ways have you experienced (or heard testified) family devotion making a positive difference in the life of children and the family?⁸
2. Where is your secret closet? What time of day is most suitable for your devotion? How do you protect that time?⁹

Closing Prayer:

⁸ Turner, William C. (2002). *A Journey through the Church Covenant*. Valley Forge, PA. Judson Press , pg. 71

⁹ Ibid, Turner, William C., pg. 71

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., *Senior Pastor*

Where we are in the Church Covenant... *

HAVING BEEN LED, AS WE BELIEVE, BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers, and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, towards its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

Each month we will include a copy of the Church Covenant and highlight the current lesson. It is our hope that this will give the larger context for the passage being studied.