

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW002)

Mothering Sunday:

“Honour your parents”

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MOTHERING SUNDAY – “HONOUR YOUR PARENTS”

Service Aim:

To enable each person present to understand more about what “honouring your father and your mother” means.

Biblical Reference(s):

Exodus 20:1-2,12, Ephesians 6:1-3, Luke 2:51, 15:11-16, John 19:26-27, Proverbs 1:8, Ruth 1:7-18

Outline of Service:

Welcome	Introduce the theme
Opening Prayer	
Opening songs:	<u>A couple of songs to draw people into worship</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	YouTube clip “The mom song!” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children hand out gifts to their mothers as a “thank you”
Readings:	Exodus 20:1-2,12 and Ephesians 6:1-3
Talk 1:	The Bible commands us to “honour” our parents. What does that mean? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It means different things at different stages of life • 1) What does it mean for children to “honour” their parents?
Puppets:	“Why should I do that?”
Link:	Encouragement to children to obey their parents.
Song:	<u>A song/s about the Fatherhood of God</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 2:	2) What does it mean for young adults to “honour” their parents?
Drama:	Modern dramatization of 1 st part of Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-16)
Talk 2 cont:	Honouring parents comes with a promise from God
Song:	<u>A song/s about obeying God</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 3:	3) What does it mean for older adults to “honour” their parents?
Reading:	John 19:26-27
Talk 3 cont:	Summary
Prayer:	Prayer of “Thanks”
Confession:	“Sorry” prayer
Prayer:	Prayer of “Please”
Lord’s Prayer	<u>Sung Lord’s Prayer</u> (See Appendix 1)
Notices	Include challenge to make an “Honour box”
Final song:	<u>Final song</u> (See Appendix 1)
Blessing	

Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

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Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the Mothering Sunday service and introduce the theme of “Honour you father and your mother,” the 5th of the 10 Commandments.

Opening Prayer:

You may choose to open the service with:

- an informal prayer
- a Bible verse eg. Jeremiah 31:3
- a prayer from a book like “New Patterns for Worship”¹ that the congregation can say together,
- or the following responsive prayer could be used:

*The Lord says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with loving-kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3)*

Thank you Lord for drawing us to worship you here today

“Come near to God and he will come near to you” (James 4:8)

Help us by your Spirit to come near to you

“Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs” (Psalm 100:2)

You are worthy O Lord and God,

to receive glory and honour and praise. Amen

Openings Songs

A couple of songs to draw people into worship as per Appendix 1

Warm up:

The warm up is an opportunity to open up the subject that Mothering Sunday is an opportunity to thank God for our mothers, and to thank our mothers for all that they do for us. You might like to show the YouTube clip, “The Mom song”²

This can be followed by saying that one of the ways that we can show our appreciation of our mothers is by giving them small gifts.

- Ask how many people have given their mother a gift today.
- Tell the congregation that you have three gifts at the front – one is a bunch of flowers, one is a small box of chocolates and one is a special voucher that says: *“I will wash up the tea things this week!”*
- Invite three children or young people to come forward, take a gift, say one thing that they love about their mum and then go and give the gift to their mum.
- Then say something like:
Gifts are a good way of expressing our love for our mothers; however the Bible talks about something really important that we are commanded to give to our parents, both mothers and fathers.

¹ Church House Publishing – ISBN 0715120603

² The “Mom song” can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXgoJ0f5EsQ>

Readings:

The readings are Exodus 20:1-2, 12 and Ephesians 6:1-3 and could be read by two children, two young people or one adult and one child in a modern version of the Bible.

Talk 1:

Flowers and chocolates are lovely gifts to give our mothers,

- Tidying our bedrooms and washing the tea things may be even better,
- However what God **commands** us to give our parents; mothers and fathers,
- in both the Old and the New Testaments is “HONOUR.”

So what does honour mean?

- Honour is about treating our parents with love and respect as the important people that they are,
- and it means different things at different stages in our lives.

This morning we will look at what honouring our parents means when we are children and young adults,

- And what honouring our parents means when we are no longer living at home and dependent upon our parents.

So beginning with those who are under the age of 18:

1) How could this younger group honour their parents?

St Paul teaches us that children honour their parents by OBEYING them,

- and that simply means doing what our parents ask us to do,
- when they ask us to do it,
- without answering back and arguing.

If mum asks us to put away the toys then we put them away without complaining.

- If dad tells us it is time to go to bed then we go to bed without arguing.

When Jesus was a child he perfectly obeyed his parents.

- Luke 2 verse 51 tells us that “*Jesus went down to Nazareth with them (his parents) and was obedient to them*”

Jesus shows us in His behaviour what God expects of all children, that they too will obey their parents.

- But it isn't all one way, for God expects parents to be godly and not harsh with their children.
- In Ephesians 6 verse 4 St Paul writes, “*Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord*”
- Parents are expected to model God to their children through their parenting;
- by being good, faithful, true, loving, kind, patient and trustworthy.

If we learn as children to obey our parents, then that lesson will help us all through life when we come across other people we need to obey,

- like teachers at school or the boss at work.
- Not only that but we will also find it easier to obey our Heavenly Father.

I think that our puppet “James” has some learning to do in this area of obedience!

Puppets:

You could use the puppet script, "Why should I do that" (see Appendix 2) at this point. This script works with a boy puppet "James"³ and an older man puppet "Grandad." The aim of the puppet script is to teach children in a practical way what honouring parents means.

Link:

So children can I encourage you this morning to honour your parents by obeying them, for when you do this, you please your Heavenly Father.

- Let's stand and worship our Father in heaven, who is our perfect parent.

Song:

A song/s about the Fatherhood of God as per Appendix 1

Talk 2:

We have learnt about how children honour their parents, but what about as we get older?

2) What does it mean for young adults to "honour" their parents?

As we become older we honour our parents by showing them RESPECT and by LISTENING to them before we make our own decisions;

- remembering the wisdom that they have gained over the years.
- Proverbs 1:8 tells us to: *"listen, my son to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching"*

As young adults we may think that we know more than our parents, but in many ways our parents know much more than we think!

- You may know the story of the 25 year old who, while reflecting on his father's wisdom, couldn't believe how much his dad had learnt in ten years because when he was fifteen he was sure that his dad knew nothing!

As well as listening to our parents we also honour them by accepting who they are, and by not bad mouthing them, because as we get older we can often become more aware of our parents' faults; that they aren't perfect.

- However, we aren't perfect either and God still commands us to honour our parents, however imperfect they seem to us, and from time to time, we may need to choose to forgive them.

Unfortunately the young man in Jesus' parable hadn't learnt to honour his father

- Watch this.

Drama:

The drama is a modern dramatization of the first part of the Prodigal Son ie Luke 15:11-16 "The Prodigal" and can be found at Appendix 3. The purpose of this drama is to show the consequences of the son dishonouring his father.

³ You can purchase both a boy and a Grandad puppet from www.onewayuk.com
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Talk 2 cont:

The Son's lack of respect for his Father in Jesus' story is breath taking isn't it?

- By asking for his share of the inheritance he was effectively saying to his father, "*I wish you were dead.*"

But look where the Son ended up when his Father's money ran out.

- He became a slave, mucking out pigs, which is as about as low as it could get for a Jew.
- He was penniless, desperately hungry, friendless, miserable and lonely.

The consequence of this Son dishonouring his Father was that his life ended up in a total mess.

- If you know the rest of that story, which is in Luke's Gospel chapter 15, then you know that fortunately for him, the Son came to his senses, repented, and was met by the love and total forgiveness of his father.

Commandment No.5: "*Honour your father and your mother*" is the one commandment of the ten that comes with a specific promise from God attached to it;

- We are promised a reward if we obey it.
- In Exodus 20:12 we are told to honour our parents SO THAT, "*you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you*"
- The way the promise is expressed in the New Testament is as follows: SO THAT "*it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth*" (Ephesians 6:3)
- SO THAT it may go well with you.....

The Bible says that there is a link between honouring our parents and God blessing our lives,

- so children honour your mother and your father by obeying them.
- Young adults honour your parents by showing them respect, listening to them and accepting them with their faults,
- And then you will know God's blessing upon your life.
- Parents – remember that this isn't a one way street! You are expected to model God to your children through your parenting; by being good, faithful, true, loving, kind, patient and trustworthy.

Song:

A song/s about obeying God as per Appendix 1

Talk 3:

And finally, having looked at how children and young adults honour their parents, let's look at the question:

3) What does it mean for older adults to "honour" their parents?

As adults, we are no longer dependent upon our parents and so obeying them is no longer what God asks us to do.

- Honouring our parents is now more about HELPING meet their needs;
- remembering that honouring is about meeting **appropriate** needs,
- and not feeling the pressure to meet demands, which is something quite different altogether.

Some people will honour their parents through daily contact,

- others through weekly, fortnightly or even monthly contact
- each situation will be different and the Lord will show you what the right way to honour your parents is.

Listen to how Jesus honoured his widowed mother when he was hanging on the cross:

Reading:

The reading is John 19:26-27 and could be read by a child, young person or adult in a modern version of the Bible.

Talk 3 cont:

Jesus honoured his mother by making sure she was looked after once he was gone.

- He arranged for his friend and disciple John to take His mother home with him.

So this morning we have learnt that honouring our parents is something that God commands each one of us to do,

- Whatever our age,
- Promising to bless us if we do this.

As children we honour our parents by obeying them.

As young adults we honour our parents by showing them respect, listening to them and accepting them.

As older adults we honour our parents by meeting appropriate needs.

Let's go away from here and do it.

Prayer of "Thanks":

Introduce the prayer by saying that you are going to have three prayers this morning, a "Thank you" prayer a "Sorry" prayer and a "Please" prayer.

The "Thank you" prayer for mothers can be split up and given to six children as follows:

Child 1: **Thank you Lord for our mothers and all who care for us each day.**

Child 2: **Thank you for their love and all that they do for us.**

Child 3: **Thank you for their kindness and for their support.**

Child 4: **Thank you for their patience when we don't get things right.**

Child 5: **Thank you for their comfort when we are hurt.**

Child 6: **Thank you for their encouragement when we find life hard.**

All children: **Please bless our mothers today with your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

Confession and Absolution – "Sorry" prayer:

Lead into a time of Confession. You may like to say something like:

Having thanked our Heavenly Father for our mothers we are now going to ask Father God to forgive us for the times when we haven't honoured them.

This prayer can be split up and given to a child, a young adult and an older adult as follows:

All: **Heavenly Father please forgive us when we haven't honoured our mother and our father.**

Child: **We are sorry for the times we have not obeyed them.**

Young adult: **We are sorry for the times we haven't listened to them or respected them.**

Older adult: **We are sorry for the times we have failed to meet their legitimate needs.**

All: **Help us to get better at honouring our parents, for the glory of your name. Amen.**

Follow this prayer with a simple prayer of Absolution. This could be:

- an informal prayer led by the service leader or
- an Absolution prayer from a book like "New Patterns for Worship."⁴

Prayer of "Please":

You may like to invite all the mothers in the congregation to stand up and then invite the Holy Spirit to come and equip them with all that they need to be godly mothers.

You might pray something like:

Father we ask that you would fill each mother afresh with your Holy Spirit this morning.

Please give her love, wisdom and strength as she looks after her children.

Encourage her as she serves you in this way.

For the glory of your name. Amen.

You may then like to ask everyone to stand up and pray something like:

Father we ask that you would fill each one of us afresh with your Holy Spirit this morning.

Please give us all we need to be able to honour our parents.

For the glory of your name. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Sung Lord's Prayer as per Appendix 1

Notices:

After the notices, you might like to challenge parents with children to make an "Honour" box out of something like a shoebox. Every time a child "honours" their mother or father by obeying them, their action is written onto a piece of paper and put into the "honour" box. At the end of the week the contents of the box are emptied and read out around a family meal.

Final Song:

Final song as per Appendix 1.

This might be a good opportunity to hand out bunches of flowers.

Remember that Mothering Sunday can be a difficult time for many women for all sorts of reasons. Some churches invite people to come and get flowers to give to their mothers, which can be helpful in some situations.

⁴ <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/newpatterns.aspx>

Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

Go from here to obey God's command to honour your father and your mother,
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among
you and remain with you always. Amen.

Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) A couple of songs to draw people into worship. Ideas include:

- Far and near hear the call (Graham Kendrick © 1996 Make Way Music)
- God is love; let heaven adore Him (Timothy Rees)
- Worthy, you are worthy (Matt Redman © 1999 Thankyou Music)
- Your love is amazing (Brenton Brown & Brian Doerksen © 2000 Vineyard Songs)

ii) A song/s about the Fatherhood of God. Ideas include:

- Before the throne of God above (Charitie L.Bancroft)
- Father God I wonder how I managed to exist (Ian Smale © 1984 Thankyou Music)
- How deep the Father's love for us (Stuart Townend © 1995 Thankyou Music)
- Over the mountains and the sea (Martin Smith © 1994 Curious? Music UK)

iii) A song/s about obeying God. Ideas include:

- As for me and my house (Jim Bailey © 1997 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Please fill me Lord (Alan Price © 1990 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- This is my desire (Reuben Morgan © 1995 Reuben Morgan / Hillsong Publishing)
- Uh well, it's excellent to be obedient (Sammy Horner arr.Donald Thomson © 1992 Daybreak Music Ltd)

iv) Sung Lord's prayer. Ideas include:

- Dear Lord and Father (Ian Smale © 1989 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Father in heaven, great is your name (Keith and Kristyn Getty © 2002 Thankyou Music)

v) Final song. Ideas include:

- Jesus put this song (Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music)
- Now thank we all our God (Martin Rinkart)
- Tell out my soul (Timothy Dudley-Smith © 1961 Timothy Dudley-Smith /Oxford University Press)
- There is a higher throne (Kristyn Lennox & Keith Getty)

Appendix 2 – Puppet Script - “Why should I do that?”

Characters:



The script is a dialogue between a young boy puppet called “James” who wants to follow Jesus but keeps getting things wrong, and his wise old “Grandad” puppet who helps to sort him out. Each puppet is operated by one person from behind a screen and so it is essential that the voices are heard; radio-microphones are ideal. Puppets and puppet screens can be purchased from many sources including <http://www.onewayuk.com/>

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Enter Grandad and James

James: Slavery.....that’s what I call it....slavery!

Grandad: Hello James....what is all this muttering about?

James: I’m not a slave and I’m not about to become one.....

Grandad: Really....I seem to remember seeing you out on your skateboard yesterday afternoon, and down the park the day before.....that doesn’t look like slavery to me James.

James: Do this....do that....I’m fed up with it

Grandad: Yes I can see that James...so where have you got this idea from that you are a slave? What have you been asked to do?

James: Tidy and clean my bedroom Grandad....

Grandad: That seems fair enough James

James: But it is **my** bedroom Grandad....I like it in a mess. I can’t find anything when it is all tidied up.

Grandad: That’s because you throw everything inside your big cupboard and shut the door.

James: I’m not allowed to do that this time....oh no....the slave-driver has already spoken

Grandad: And this slave driver.....could it be that you are talking about your mother James?

James: The one and the same.....Mrs slave driver.....and not only do I have to tidy and clean my bedroom but **she**.....

Grandad: She...that doesn’t sound very respectful James

James: Well anyway....**She** has told me I have to empty the dish-washer and go and post Auntie Beryl’s birthday card when I have finished in my bedroom. I am not a slave so I am not going to do any of those things.....then she will learn.

- Grandad: Mmm. James are you hoping to eat later on today?
- James: Of course Grandad.....we are having toad in the hole for tea....my favourite. I love covering the toad....you know the sausage....in tomato ketchup and then stabbing at it with my fork, imagining that....
- Grandad: I'm not sure I want to know James. And tomorrow when you play football, will you be wearing the dirty kit you wore last week?
- James: Oh don't be gross Grandad....that was all muddy after the game. Mum should have washed it and ironed it by now,
- Grandad: And no doubt put it in your sports drawer in your bedroom. And will you be walking to your swimming lesson on Monday?
- James: Grandad....you know the swimming pool is five miles away.....mum drives me there.....
- Grandad: And waits for you for the hour you have your lesson?
- James: Yes.....
- Grandad: Washing, shopping, cleaning, cooking, ironing, chauffeuring, tidying..... that sounds to me like someone else is doing most of the work around here.
- James: Maybe....but why should I tidy and clean my room, and why should I empty the dish washer and have to take Auntie Beryl's birthday card to the post-box.....I am going to miss my favourite TV programme Grandad?
- Grandad: Oh James.....you have so much to learn....but doing what your mum and dad ask you to do is one of the most important things you need to learn. The Lord expects children to obey their parents.
- James: The slave drivers!
- Grandad: *(Said Very slowly and deliberately)* And to show them respect.....
- James: Whoops!
- Grandad: Whoops indeed James. You know the Bible says that it is so important to God that you honour your parents by obeying them and showing them respect that he promises a reward to children who do this.
- James: Really.....I wonder what God might give me for tidying my room.....I must admit it is in a terrible mess?
- Grandad: God promises that it will go well with your life if you obey your mum and dad.
- James: Oh.....I was hoping my reward from God could be a few gold ingots from his pavement in heaven.....imagine how many sweets I could buy with a gold ingot.

Grandad: That's enough James.....now come on....let me help you get your bedroom sorted out as your mum has asked you to do, and then how about we unload the dishwasher together then take a walk to the post-box?

James: Thanks Grandad. That would be wonderful.

Grandad: And next time your mum asks you to do something.....

James: I'll do it Grandad.....really I will.....

Grandad: Without complaining?

James: Without complaining.....

Grandad: And without all this talk of slavery?

James: OK Grandad.....but do you know what Dad told me to do last week? He told me to clear all the rubbish out of the back of the car....and it wasn't even me....it wasn't fair.....and.....

Grandad: James!

Exit James and Grandad

Appendix 3 - Drama: "The Prodigal"

Luke 15:11-20

Cast: Son, Father, Narrator, couple of women
Props: Piece of paper signifying the "estate", Glass of wine, donut

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(Enter Father, who stands at the front of the room – front centre)

Father: Ralph, Ralph.....it's nearly midday. We really need your help with the harvesting in the fields.....Ralph are you up yet?

(Enter Ralph from side or back of room dressed in pyjamas and looking somewhat dishevelled. He walks slowly up to the front)

Ralph: Can't anyone get any sleep round here....I need my rest. Why should I have to work all day?

Father: Come on Ralph....we need your help.....most of us have been up since dawn.

Ralph: Nag, nag, nag.....and keep the volume down please. I have rather a bad headacheand don't ask me what time I got in last night because I can't remember, and don't lecture me about the company I keep because quite frankly I don't care.

Father: Ralph, one day half of this land will come to you.....

Ralph: *(interrupting)* One day. It can't come soon enough if you ask me.....and then I can do what I want.

Father: Ralph....

Ralph: Don't "Ralph" me Father.....in fact seeing as you are probably going to be around for quite a few more years yet.... I mean you are as strong as an ox.... why don't you just give me my share of the estate now and let me get on with living my life the way I want to?

Father: If that's what you really want Ralph. Here you are....

(Father hands over piece of paper (symbolising half the estate) to son who with a sudden burst of energy runs back down the room and out of sight. The Father stands and watches him go sadly and then exits)

Ralph: Yes!!

Narrator: Not long after Ralph's conversation with his father, he packed up his things, left home and set off for a distant country. There he enjoyed all the freedom he had wanted; living without restraint.....indulging himself in every way he could.

(Enter Ralph from side or back of room. He staggers towards the front of the room, looking somewhat dishevelled with a glass of wine in one hand, a donut in another and with a couple of women hanging off his arms, propping him up)

Ralph: Ah this is the life.....mmm that's a good donut.....and yes.....decent wine. Shame about the headache.....oh well a party a day keeps Ralphy..... ah.....happy!

(Women laugh indulgently)

Now then ladies where shall we go this evening?
How about Reggie's casino? I hear there is an exclusive party there for those of us with money.....mm.....and then we could go on to Moon's nightclub and dance the night away. It's a shame that they are only open until 5am.
Oh well.....this is the life. Come on....let's go and get half a dozen pizzas.....
I can't decide what flavour I fancy.....perhaps we'll order a dozen....ooh I do love to eat what I want and when I want it.....

(Ralph then staggers back down the room and exits)

Narrator: Before long Ralph had spent all of his money. At about the same time, there was a severe famine in the land and food was really hard to come by. Ralph was in great need so had to look for some way to earn some money. He ended up hiring himself out to a man who sent him out to his fields to feed pigs.

(Enter Ralph from side or back of room carrying a garden fork and bucket.....)

Ralph: I'm so hungry....I can't believe that I wasted all of my money.....why on earth did I order half a dozen pizzas and only eat one of them? What a fool I have been. And oh.....what a dreadful smell these pigs make.....Day after day I have to get up early to feed these smelly creatures...and what do I get in return? Almost nothing....in fact I am so hungry that I am even tempted to eat the pig swill these pigs are eating. I don't think you can get much lower than that.

What a mess I am in....why did I treat my Father like that? He is such a good and generous man.....even the servants who work for him get fed really well.....there is always food left over after they have eaten. I need to go back and apologise to him for treating him so badly....I don't deserve to be called his Son anymore.

Maybe.....just maybe he might take me on as one of his servants.

(Ralph exits)