

Please read this GN unitedly sometime before or around February 7th so that everyone has sufficient time to prepare for the Feast.

Introduction to the Family Feast 2005

By Maria

FD/MM/FM 3523 12/04

Dearest Family,

THANK you for setting aside the time for the upcoming Feast. We know it's a sacrifice, in light of all that's going on and how busy things are, but it's one that the Lord will really bless. And when you look at it in practical terms, taking into account how much more effective it is to work in the spirit, how much more efficient you are when you're winning the necessary battles in the spirit as well as progressing in the physical, it's not really even a sacrifice, but rather a wise investment of time.

2. This year the Feast is going to be significantly different from most recent Feasts. Instead of giving us new material to read and absorb and meditate on, the Lord instructed us that He wanted each Home to devote the time to discussing and applying the board criteria, which you have been studying over the last month, and make goals toward implementing them in your Home. He knows that it has been a lot to absorb, and you probably have a lot to think and pray about and implement in order to make the counsel and instruction a reality in your Home, so He has set aside this Feast as a time for each Home to get a good start in that direction.

3. To this end, each board has prepared a workshop for your Home to do during the Feast. These are structured meetings with prepared discussion points, P&P questions, and material to read. There are six boards, so that will be six meeting slots. The nature of these workshop meetings will probably make

these Feast days less relaxing, and they may feel less spiritually refilling than past Feasts, but this time of discussing how you could and should apply the criteria and uniting around the standard of the Word in each Home is what the Lord knows is needed at this point in the restructuring and strengthening process.

4. As you know from all that the Lord has said lately, we're at a crucial point in Family history, and we really have to give it all we've got in order to win this pivotal battle and get our "Titanic" out of danger. We're making progress, we're changing, and thanks to each of you and the individual decisions you're making, the Family is being strengthened and is turning around. But we still have a ways to go.

5. The Lord called this a "wartime Feast," because we're in the midst of heavy battle, and this Feast will mean more hard work. As Peter explained in an earlier GN, he and I realize that this past year has been intense and taxing for many, if not most of you, and you probably feel ready for some calm and relaxing spiritual refilling and rest. But we're not quite there yet! We have to keep moving forward, we have to be willing to sacrifice and keep fighting for forward progress if we want to win this war, save the Family, and fulfill our destiny.

6. That's why we wanted you to read the introduction to this Feast much earlier than usual, so that you can prepare physically, mentally, and spiritually for what promises to be a very fruitful, but also concentrated,

time of discussion, prayer, and planning to apply the Word during the Feast days.

A Few Practical Points About the Workshops

- **Each day you'll need to schedule two meetings—probably one in the morning, and one in the afternoon.** In past Feasts we have left the option open for an evening meeting, if you preferred that to an afternoon meeting. But due to the length of these workshops, we recommend that you hold the second meeting of the day in the afternoon, so that everyone can be more alert and focused. If you hold your second daily meeting in the evening, even if you start early, the meeting will go late, and you will probably struggle to keep everyone's attention.

- **The meeting slots should be three hours each, and the meetings should not go overtime if at all possible.**

9. The boards and chairpersons worked hard to narrow down their workshops so that the material they are asking you to cover or discuss would fit into a three-hour time slot. However, science has discovered that things often take longer than you anticipate, and especially in our multifaceted Homes with our dynamic and colorful personalities, discussions and meetings often go longer than planned. So the person leading the meeting needs to be prayed up, keep an eye on the clock, and not let the meeting go overtime.

10. If you see that you aren't going to be able to discuss all the topics listed in the time allotted, rather than rushing through them, pray and ask the Lord which ones are most important for your Home, and then "do few things and do them well." You can always slot other ideas and discussion topics for future Home Council meetings, or assign them to a smaller group or subcom-

mittee to nail down and present a proposal to the Home. You also don't want to get into a situation where you're so rushed for time and trying so hard to come to a conclusion that you railroad a plan through.

11. These meetings are an exercise in unity, prayerful discussion, and bonding as a team. You're setting guidelines and looking for solutions that will help your Home to be more fruitful in the future. You want the conclusions reached to be doable, realistic, and something that everyone—or at least hopefully almost everyone—agrees to, and that the Lord confirms. So don't overextend yourself in the topics you take on to discuss, and if you can't get through the whole workshop, that's okay. Just do what you can do in the time allotted, and do it prayerfully, lovingly, and in unity.

- **Most of the workshop plans include suggestions for songs or praise time activities**—and you're also welcome to draw from the list at the end of GN 1115, or ask the Lord for other ideas. The important thing is to dedicate sufficient time at the beginning and end of each workshop to praise and prayer.

13. There is a lot of nitty-gritty work to be done in discussing the various points and coming to conclusions and brainstorming solutions. But don't forget that above all, we are a spiritual revolution; the battles we fight must be won above all in the spiritual realm, and no amount of talking and discussing can bring the same results as good, wholehearted, desperate prayer, wielding the keys, calling for the help of our spirit helpers, and using the undefeatable weapon of praise! So don't neglect the times of praise and prayer; put sufficient focus and time into that part of the meetings as well. This will be a key ingredient in helping your meetings to go well and be fruitful.

- **Your Home will need to choose individuals to lead the workshops, and you'll want to choose them soon so that they can be preparing.** It's important that the people leading each meeting have the faith to lead it, and are spiritually mature enough to keep things moving along and moderate the discussion, etc. You could also keep in mind the gifts and expertise of those in your Home, and have a parent or childcare expert help with the CP and FED workshops, a JETT/teen-shepherd-type on the JT workshop; an outreacher on the CGO workshop, etc. Another option is that, in cases where someone who is integrally involved with that pillar is not experienced in leading meetings, you could have two people pair up to lead the meeting—one who is more used to moderating discussions and keeping meetings moving, and another who is familiar with the topic being discussed and specializes in that board pillar.

15. These workshops do not need to be led by Home teamwork members, although they can be if you wish. Whoever you choose to lead each meeting will need to spend time ahead of the Feast to familiarize themselves with the respective workshop, pray and counsel about what the priorities are for your Home to cover if it looks like you might not get through all the material, and prepare anything that needs to be prepared ahead of time. It would also be good for the person leading each meeting to have studied that board's criteria carefully so that they're familiar with it (as well as having a copy on hand), as questions will probably come up in the course of the meeting. This is very important so that each workshop is as fruitful as possible.

16. It will not work for the person leading the meeting to try to host it "on the fly." So please choose your representatives to lead the meetings early on, so that they

can study the workshop plan, that board's criteria, and be familiar enough with both to have a handle on questions that may come up during the meetings.

- **The workshops were prepared by the international boards, and finalized by the international board chairpersons.** Peter and I have read over the workshops, but what the boards chose to present or ask you to discuss in their workshops was up to each board to pray about and decide.

- **You will probably want to have someone take good notes** during each workshop meeting, as there will be points you'll need to follow up on, points that are delegated to individuals (and they may need reminders), questions you'll want to jot down to ask the Lord about, deadlines you'll want to follow up on, etc. This is very important if you want these discussions to bear lasting fruit. You will also want to have a good record of your decisions and conclusions from each meeting for those who aren't able to attend the meeting, and for future reference. You'll need to confirm your decisions with the Lord, too, so having a clear record of what was discussed and decided will be helpful in formulating your P&P questions later.

- **It's up to you whether or not the JETTs and junior teens in your Home participate in most of the workshops.** In some cases it could be both encouraging and good training for them to be able to be there and participate. For example, if they're interested in or gifted in outreach or teaching the children, they might have good input in those workshops, and it would also help them to feel trusted and needed and a valuable part of the Home in that respect. In other cases, the subject matter would not be interesting

or beneficial for them, and they could be a big help in caring for the children so that the adults can all be present. In some cases the Lord might show you that topics will come up that are above their maturity level, or even that the discussion of the nitty-gritty of the problems would not be helpful for them. This is something that the parents and shepherds can pray about and decide together. Please do as the Lord leads you. Whether you would want to have JETTs and teens attend the CS board workshop would depend on what topic(s) you choose to discuss. That decision can be left to your Home teamwork. The JT workshop is designated for 18 on up.

20. Whatever you decide about the age levels to include in the workshops, please do take the time after the meetings (or after the Feast), to fill your junior teens and JETTs in on the decisions you've made in the meetings in a way that draws them in and helps them feel included and considered. This will go a long way in helping them want to participate and comply with what has been decided.

- **Because these meetings are ones that will be harder to “make up” afterwards for those who miss them,** please pray and carefully schedule who will be with the children during each meeting so that the least amount of people possible have to miss the meetings, and so that the load is shared and no one has to miss a majority of them. You could also consider recording the meetings for those who aren't present to listen to later, or giving them the notes to read, or having someone fill them in.

22. Please pray about how to best handle this in your Home so that those who miss a meeting don't wind up feeling left out of the loop. In Homes with lots of children, most people will probably have to miss at least one meeting, or maybe more than one.

But it's important to fill each other in enough that everyone has a say and a vote regarding the decisions your Home is making.

Feast Reading and Activity Materials for the Children

23. There is a new *MLK*, “Become One,” to read with the children during the Feast. Although there is only one *MLK* for the kids this Feast, we've put together a reading list on a variety of subjects, which can be used as a basis for planning feeding Word classes and Word-time activities for your children. (See the “Feast 2005 Reading Lists for Children” at the end of this GN.)

24. The Feast mailing for the children also includes a variety of new activities.

- The “Spirit Helper Eights” card game, a version of the card game “Crazy Eights” that features several spirit helpers;
- Four Endtime dioramas covering the beasts of Daniel 7 and 8 for OCs (may require assistance) to color, cut, and assemble;
- A poster entitled “100% Discipleship Means”;
- A variety of other activities, coloring sheets, and simple games.

Promise from the Lord about the workshop meetings

25. (*Jesus*:) This Feast won't be like other Feasts, which are usually a relaxing and refilling time in My arms. Instead, it will be challenging; you will have to really stir yourselves up in order to reach the goal. There will be hard work involved in discussions, meetings, praying about things. There will be sacrifices you will need

to make for the sake of unity and the sake of obedience to the high standard of My Word. But if you are willing to gird up and discuss and pray and seek Me, you will find Me, you will find the solutions, you will gain My mind and My perspective, and these three days will go a long way in helping your Home to become part of the Family of the future. (*End of message.*)

Other Points and Reminders About the Feast

- **Please keep the Feast days free of any outside engagements.**

- **Because this Feast is a milestone in building your winning team, it would be good for your whole Home to be in attendance**, so that you can be united on the decisions you make and can share this experience of discussing these important topics and seeking the Lord together. There might be unavoidable circumstances that would prevent this, such as emergency legal or medical situations. But if at all possible, every member of your Home should be physically present for this Feast—in other words, not in another Home, having the Feast on the road, visiting relatives, taking care of business in other countries, etc.

- **Please ask the Lord how you can keep meals and cleanups and any other essential Home duties simple**, so as to require as little time and effort as possible.

- **Whether or not you decide to invite your Home's live-out Missionary members,* Active members, or other long-time friends to participate is up to you, and what the Lord shows you would be best in your particular**

situation. Please keep in mind, however, that because you will be discussing details of your Home, members, rules, problems and solutions, etc., they would need to be fairly strong in the Lord and advanced in their knowledge of the Word and the Charter and the Family and how things work if they're going to benefit from the meetings and not be stumbled or require an explanation for too many things. Another point to consider is whether your Home members will be as free to share their hearts and honestly and humbly discuss these topics if others are present. Please consider these things and ask the Lord, and He will show you what is best.

(*These are sheep and friends who have become Missionary members and tithe and report to your Home. See GN 1096, "The Family Membership Expands.")

- **Even though the meetings will be long and more taxing than most Feasts, if you can afford to have your Home schedule more relaxed during these days**, if your Home members can take extra time with the Lord, time for meditation, and even extra sleep, please try to schedule things accordingly. Between the children, the meetings, and the P&Ps that need to be done to confirm your decisions, you might not have much extra time. But please try to take any extra time you do have for rest and refilling.

31. It's not a time to try to pack in other work or other personal projects. You need as much rest and time with the Lord as possible in order to be alert, focused, and at your best during these important meetings. So please schedule things accordingly and pace yourselves, so that these meetings can be all that the Lord intends them to be for your Home. Please also try to schedule the care of the children and Home duties so that everyone has a chance for quiet time at some point during the day, and so that the load is shared as equally as possible.

Basic Schedule for Feast Days

Evening before Day 1

(either February 23 or 24):

32. Read GN 1115, “Keynote to the Feast Workshops.” The person leading this meeting will want to read the GN ahead of time, as there is some prep to be done, and you’ll need to choose the praise exercises in advance and prepare for them. You’ll want to start the meeting with some rousing songs of praise to get everyone warmed up. This won’t be a long meeting—probably an hour to an hour and a half at the most.

33. Whether or not you choose to have older children present for this meeting is up to you. There are a couple of mild mentions of loving Jesus as our Husband and Lover in the reading material and praise exercises, but nothing that would be inappropriate. Another option is to have JETTs on up in this meeting, and later read portions of the messages and do the praise exercises with the children. This meeting is preparation for the workshops that will follow, so it’s up to you to pray about and decide how this time will be most fruitful for your Home.

Day 1 (February 24 or 25):

34. Morning: Coaching and Shepherding board workshop (GN 1116).

35. Afternoon: JETT and Teen board workshop (GN 1116).

Day 2 (February 25 or 26):

36. Morning: Children and Parenting board workshop (GN 1116).

37. Afternoon: Family Education Department board workshop (GN 1117).

Day 3 (February 26 or 27):

38. Morning: Public Relations board workshop (GN 1117).

39. Afternoon: Church Growth and Outreach board workshop (GN 1117).

40. Evening: Closing message and celebration!

41. You can look over GN 1118, which has a message to read and a few bonding and praise exercises you can do together during whatever event you decide on. Please pray and decide ahead of time how you would like to spend this time together. This event should be geared around the adults, down through whatever age participated in most of the meetings. It could be a late, nice dinner after the children are in bed, or a sit-around type fellowship over wine/drinks and snacks, or a dance night, or some combination, or some completely different idea—whatever you would like to do to relax together and celebrate the victory.

42. Please try to formulate your plan before the Feast so that someone isn’t scrambling to get something together on the last day. It would be good if it didn’t entail too much work and wasn’t complicated. But please do put some prayer and preparation into it ahead of time so that it can be a nice reward for you to all enjoy together after working hard and pulling together in the spirit. Appreciate each other, and enjoy being a team!

43. Peter and I will be praying for you! We love you very much, and we praise our Husband for the privilege of serving Him alongside such willing, faithful, dedicated and sacrificial co-workers. We can’t wait for Heaven, when we’ll have the biggest and best celebration ever—celebrating the end of all the battles we fought here on Earth, and the

coming of the Lord's Kingdom! What a day that will be! Until then, we'll keep going for Him and keep our eyes on the goal!

Much love in our Keeper of the Keys,
our Strength and Eternal Reward,
Mama

Feast 2005 Reading Lists for Children

By Kids Pubs Department

For the children during Feast 2005, the Lord led in preparing a reading list with discipleship as the central theme. Below you'll find sections of the "Word Curriculum 2004" for each age group, with three to four sections for you to select reading materials from to read with your children during the Feast.

Before the "Word Curriculum" lists we are including *MLKs* and *Gen-Ups* that have come out since the "Word Curriculum," which would be good to reread with the children during the Feast.

All ages

- "Why Family Disciples Live Communally," MLK #196
- "Using the Keys, Part 4," MLK #200
- "Be Ye Separate," MLK #201

Ages 9-11

- "The Things That Really Count," GU 15, page 14
- "The Invincibles," GU 17-21, page 4
- "Hearts Aflame," GU 20, page 14
- "Benefits of Communal Homes," GU 20, page 18
- "Minimizing Ungodly Influences," GU 21, page 16

We recommend that you read ML #3524:4-12 and the section "Praise Exercises" (GN 1115), about praise with the 9- to 11-year-olds.

You could also read portions of the Letter "God's Trampolines" (ML #3508:3-5, 23-39, 40-55; GN 1098) with this age group to help them understand what the adults and teens in the Home have been studying during the study month and the Feast. (If your JETTs have not yet read this Letter, this would be good for them to study over in full.)

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The following listings are taken from the "Word Curriculum 2004," but we're only including the topic titles rather than all the material listed under that topic. Prior to the Feast you may find it helpful to take some time to select specific material you'd like to read with your children that would be most applicable or helpful to them and what they're going through at the time. The children do not have to read all the material in the sections, but it'd be good that they study some of it. It's up to you as to what of the included topics you'd like to focus on with your children.

Ages 1-2

- "Word Curriculum" Topics:
 - Fight the Good Fight
 - Grandpa and Maria
 - Missionary Life / Witnessing

Ages 3-4

- "Word Curriculum" Topics:
 - Discipleship
 - Missionary Life / Witnessing
 - Obedience

Ages 5–6

“Word Curriculum” Topics:

Living for Jesus
Our Family
Conviction

Ages 7–8

“Word Curriculum” Topics:

Discipleship
Our Family
Conviction / Maturity

Ages 9–11

“Word Curriculum” Topics:

Discipleship
In the World, but Not of the World
Missionary Life
Conviction / Maturity

* * *

Following is a list of categories from the “Word Course” that you might want your JETT’s and/or junior teens to read from, especially if they are not attending the two daily meetings during the three days of the Feast.

Be a Disciple
Called Out of the World
Developing Convictions
Commit to Excellence

The children can enjoy praise times during the Feast, using the new ideas listed in GN 1115. Encourage them also to pray for the adults in the Home as they hold meetings twice daily for the three days of the Feast, discussing ways to improve your Home’s discipleship. As the Lord said about this, “Encourage the children to pray for the adults in the meetings. Their prayers will be simple, but the power of a child’s prayer is great, so use it!”