

THE PRACTICE OF FAMILY PRAYER TRADITIONS IN THE GMIM EBEN HAEZER KAATEN CONGREGATION

Praktik Tradisi Doa dalam Keluarga di Jemaat GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten

Iren Takasiliang ^{1a(*)}, Madeline D. A. Tamaka ^{2b}, Nadia M. C. Sinubu ^{3c}, Patricia Putri Reppi, ^{4d}
Denny Adry Tarumingi ^{5e} Mieke Nova Sendow ^{6f} Evi Stans Evlin Tumiwa ^{7g} Maria Elisa
Tulangow^{8h}

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 Universitas Kristen Indonesia Tomohon

irentakasiliang@gmail.com
tamakadea@gmail.com
nadiasinubu@gmail.com
patriciarepi16@gmail.com
dennyadritarumingi22@gmail.com
mieke_sendow@teologi-ukit.ac.id
evi.s.e.tumiwa@gmail.com
maria_tulangouw@teologi-ukit.ac.id

(*) Corresponding Author
irentakasiliang@gmail.com

How to Cite: Takasiliang, et al. (2025). The Practice of Family Prayer Traditions in The GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten Congregation. doi: 10.36526/js.v3i2.6650

Abstract

Received: 27-08-2025
Revised: 13-09-2025
Accepted: 10-11-2025

Keywords:
Contextual theology,
Family prayer,
GMIM,
Minahasan culture,
Pastoral theology

This article describes family prayer traditions as practiced in the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation as a place of spiritual growth, cultural inculturation, and pastoral care. Based on a qualitative and participatory ethnographic design comprising 15 nuclear families, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and the use of supporting documentation, this study examines how family prayer has been structured, organised, and experienced in the day-to-day life of Minahasan Christian families. The results demonstrate that family prayer has continued to be actively incorporated into the daily life of the family, particularly in the evenings or at mealtimes or even during crises, in such a way that the home is an *ecclesia domestica* where faith is recounted and passed down through generations. Prayer leadership is shared in differentiated forms: fathers are expected to be the spiritual heads, mothers to be consistent guardians, and children to be emerging leaders who are given responsibilities. The study also indicates that Minahasan cultural values, including *mapalus*, *walewangko*, and *masarang*, inform the sense of prayer and the dynamics of relations, which is transformed into a place of thankfulness, vulnerability, and solidarity. Meanwhile, the study notes that there are strong stressors, including work exhaustion, school pressure, information-related disruptions, and relationship stressors, that jeopardise the status quo of this tradition. The study finds that the reinforcement of family prayer must be carried out through purposeful pastoral accompaniment, ecclesial practices, and theological understanding of domestic spirituality as a location of Christian witness in modern Minahasa.

BACKGROUND

Family prayer is one of the most prominent tenets of the spiritual life of Christian congregations (Simanjuntak, 2025), specifically the Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa, GMIM). With the continually changing social, cultural, and technological processes, family prayer remains a practice to sustain a sense of faith, pass religious beliefs, and reinforce relationships among family members (Ta'birampo et al., 2023). This practice is not considered a liturgical commitment in the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation; it is part of an embodied faith in ordinary life. It shows the theological and pastoral concerns of the congregation to foster the family as a domestic church (Banarto & Siringoringo, 2020), as taught in ecclesial texts. Nevertheless, contemporary family trends are transforming traditional family prayer routines due to high mobility and the impact of globalisation (Badrudin, 2023; Ndruru and Pardosi, 2024). Thus, it is important to have

a subtle knowledge of its various forms, meanings, and functions of this tradition of prayers in its local context so that it can continue to happen. This paper aims to discover the empirical truth of this tradition within the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation as a reflection of Christian communities in the Minahasa region.

The Minahasa situation has unique cultural features that are highly connected with the powerful values of kinship, togetherness, and religiosity. The Minahasa people have the family as the social unit, but also as the sacred place of transmission of faith and Christian identity. Family prayer patterns in GMIM, including the Eben Haezer Kaaten being one of them, are typically linked to the notions of *mapalus* (mutual cooperation) and *walewangko* (family deliberation), which show a combination of local values and the Gospel message (Nendissa et al., 2025). These prayer rituals, which are conducted in the morning and evening, include family members and are usually conducted by the head of the household or the mother. However, the literature review on the subject has shown little research that specifically deals with the dynamics, challenges, and changes in family prayer traditions at the local level of the GMIM congregation. These contextual insights are critical for developing relevant and effective pastoral strategies. This study consequently becomes a reaction to that demand, which aims to study the meaning of prayer traditions and their significance in shaping the resilience of Christian families in the face of social change (Tafuli et al. 2025).

Pastoral theology and studies of family Studies of family prayer in Christianity Academic scholarship on family prayer in Christian settings has evolved dramatically during the last 20 years, especially in family studies. As Klaassen (2018) stresses, family prayer serves as a generator of the intergenerational transmission of faith, as it is a resistance to secularisation (SiRegaR, 2023). Within the framework of Southeast Asia, it has been reported that family prayer rituals among urban Christian communities have been significantly changed by working requirements and online lifestyles (Utomo et al., 2025). A few scholars, such as Sihombing (2019) and Lumentut (2021), have studied the role of prayer in Batak and Minahasan Christian families, but their primary interest has been in normative theological issues and not in practices at the congregational level. These works are significant starting points, but have not exhaustively touched on local details, including social dynamics, family leadership patterns, and the effects of Minahasan culture on the practices of day-by-day prayers. In addition, most of the literature is descriptive and hardly incorporates comprehensive ethnographic methods. According to Tibo (2018), in their attempt to achieve family prayer, parents who practice shared prayer and develop a life of prayer within the family strive to do so by fulfilling their personal prayer, joint mealtime prayer, and engagement in liturgical life (*leiturgia*) in church.

Among GMIM itself, some research has been conducted concerning family spirituality, including the study of Runtuwene (2017), in which the authors emphasise the significance of family formation in the GMIM Synod. Nevertheless, this study gives more attention to church policy and fails to address the subjective experiences of congregants at the ground level. The present study by Tumimomor (2022) is related to evening prayer among GMIM families, but it is confined to the environment of Tondano and does not imply context-specific differences in other churches like Kaaten. Moreover, these studies mostly use quantitative methods that cannot sufficiently reveal the subtle connotations and spiritual aspects of daily prayer routines. As a matter of fact, family prayer tradition is not just a tedious routine, but the world where faith, identity, and family relationships are actively constructed. Without a qualitative approach, our ideas of this tradition will be shallow and unresponsive to the actual lives of the congregation. This necessitates theological, anthropological, and pastoral research interest to understand the complexity of prayer practices in the local context (Ruata, 2025).

Meanwhile, the evolution of research on family spirituality as part of contextual theology has been characterised by an increasing tendency toward incorporating local cultural values into religious activities. For example, Nababan and Silaban (2025) in the Gekisia Tanjung congregation show that most congregants (64.52) are familiar with the local culture, and 80.65% are engaged in church ministries. Up to 83.87% of the respondents said that local culture assists them in understanding the Values of the Christian faith. The paper concludes that local culture can be a powerful tool for contextualising the Christian faith through the prism of biblical values. In Indonesia, other studies on

liturgical inculturation also take similar means, albeit rarely, on non-liturgical practices like family prayer. Masarang (togetherness) and mapalus are some of the values in Minahasan culture that have a high potential to add dimensions to family prayer as a spiritual solidarity (Kaunang et al., 2024). Nonetheless, no studies have directly related Minahasan cultural values to daily prayers in GMIM Christian families. This creates a disparity between theories of inculturation and practice at the congregational level. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how local culture creates and provides meaning to the traditions of prayer among the families of the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation.

Despite the number of studies that have been conducted on family prayer and spirituality in the Christian context, even in Indonesia and GMIM, there are still gaps in the contextual and empirical studies. The major studies are mostly normative or macro-based and cannot, therefore be effective in discussing the thoughts and experiences of congregants on the ground, especially in marginal congregations like Eben Haezer Kaaten. Furthermore, none of the studies have taken a particular approach to integrate theological, anthropological, and pastoral perspectives to learn about family prayer practices in the GMIM. The vastness of quantitative methodology has also restricted the investigation of aspects of meaning, feeling, and relationship dynamics in everyday prayer practices. The Minahasan cultural dimension is deeply grounded in the life of the congregation, and we have not examined this cultural aspect as a shaping force in the tradition of family prayers. Consequently, pastoral strategies designed to be relevant to the realities of congregational life are frequently inapplicable. This study seeks to cover these gaps by conducting a thorough study of family prayer practices at the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation.

The proposed study seeks to examine, articulate, and discuss prayer practices within families among the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation based on theological, cultural, and pastoral lenses. In particular, it aims to comprehend the shapes, frequency, and content of the prayers performed in the family, the leadership in these practices, and those involved in the practices. Another goal of this study was to investigate the spiritual and social sense (Lumbantobing, 2024) congregants relate to family prayer practices in their daily lives. Moreover, it will seek issues and facilitating factors in maintaining such traditions in the context of social and cultural transformation. This study attempts to recreate congregants' subjective experiences of family prayer through a qualitative ethnographic method. These results should provide an empirical background for contextual family formation models in the GMIM (Kartini & Maulana, 2020). The principal aim of this study is to contribute to theological-pastoral insights on family prayer as a source of spiritual resilience in local Christian congregations.

This study has significant theological, pastoral, and social implications for the church and society. Theologically, this research can expand the discussion on family spirituality in GMIM contextual theology, especially regarding the connection between Christian faith and Minahasan culture. Theologically, the outcomes can be used to create more responsive family formation initiatives that address the realities and modern issues at the local level (Tafuli et al., 2025). The social consequences are the possibility of strengthening family resilience by reviving the traditions of prayer as a place of conversation, emotional support, and character development. Other GMIM congregations can also use this study to develop a reference related to tailoring the family pastoral approach based on local wisdom (Baskoro & Budiya, 2021; Christina et al., 2024). In addition, the results may be added to GMIM synod policies on family creation and faith passing. Such attempts can reverse the adverse effects of secularisation and fragmentation of families during modernity in the long term (Mu'asyara et al. 2024). The present paper is hence not only a scholarly work but also practically very relevant to the life of the church and society.

The originality of this research is that it combines multidisciplinary methodologies, specifically theological, anthropological, and pastoral ones (Febrianto, 2020) when addressing the subject of family praying traditions within the scope of a local GMIM congregation. Unlike past studies, which were either normative or macro-oriented, this study uses participatory ethnography to unravel the lived experiences of the congregants in Eben Haezer Kaaten. The fact that it dwells on the fusion of Minahasan cultural values with family prayer practices is also an original insight that has not been

extensively studied in Indonesian theological literature. The study also presents the idea of family prayer as an area of the inculturation of faith, which expands the current concept of Christian spirituality in the local context. In addition, it also offers a scarcity of empirical information on the dynamics of spiritual leadership in Minahasan Christian families. This research confronts the hegemony of studies that have to date focused on urban congregations or synod headquarters as the main object. This is because this novelty renders the research applicable not only to academics but also to church leaders who aim to develop genuine and sustainable Christian communities.

METHOD

This study focuses on family prayer traditions in the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation, where a qualitative design in participatory ethnography is applied (Adji, 2024; Rosmita et al., 2024). This strategy is considered the most appropriate as it allows the researcher to see prayer traditions not just as formal practices, but as practices that are lived by the social, cultural, and spiritual environments of Minahasan Christian families. Participatory ethnography focuses more on the direct participation of the researcher in the life of the community over a specific duration of time, hence permitting the intricate aspects of the subjective experience, local values, and symbolic interactions to be captured which influence the day-to-day practice of prayer.

The theoretical location of the research is the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation, a peripheral congregation in the Minahasa region which was chosen because of its typicality of integrating the Christian religion with local wisdom, such as *mapalus* (mutual cooperation) and *walewangko* (family deliberation). The sample population will be 15 nuclear families who are actively involved in the congregation, have children below the age of 18 years, and hold a prayer session in the family at least three times per week. In addition, the researcher interviewed the pastor, elders, and leaders of the communities as informants to support this.

The three primary methods for data acquisition included (1) semi-structured, in-depth interviews carried out with the heads of households, mothers, and children; (2) participant observation of family prayer sessions in the morning and the evening; and (3) documentation through field notes, photographs (with permission), and family archives such as prayer schedules or devotional notes. The interview guidelines were aimed at searching the forms, frequency, content, leadership, and spiritual and social meanings of family prayer practices.

The interactive model of Miles and Huberman on data analysis was utilised, in which data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/data verification processes were part of data analysis. The thematic analysis of the data was based on a conceptual framework that incorporated theological (prayer as ecclesia domestica), cultural (Minahasan values), and pastoral (challenges and formation strategies) dimensions. Source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking were the three methods that validated the data. Ethics were strictly followed in conducting the research, such as ensuring that informed consent was obtained in writing, ensuring that the identity of the participants was kept confidential, and that local norms and customs were observed.

By doing so, this study aims to create a comprehensive appreciation of the role of family prayer traditions as a platform for the inculturation of faith, relationships, and spiritual fortitude in the midst of modern sociocultural variations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Family Prayer as a Life and Organized Practice in Housing Life

The survey and ethnographic observations provide a complete picture of family prayer as a living and rather stable tradition in the homes of GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten. According to the respondents, family prayer is not an every-so-often event but an activity that is planned into the repetitive patterns of life. In most families, prayer is still a “no big deal aspect of Christian identity: a given thing that is done as part and parcel of being a family of Christians, and not a given spiritual appendix.

Regarding time patterns, respondents were inclined to place family prayer at significant transition points of the day. Evening prayer, particularly before sleeping, is one of the most meaningful times when the family gathers to share their daily happenings and give their concerns and desires to God. Some families stress praying before meals as a day-to-day way of expressing gratitude, and many of the respondents also stress morning prayers as a way of handing over the day before the family members head to school, to jobs, or other engagements. During crises or *pergumulan* (illness, financial hardships, relationship tensions), families tend to insert moments of prayer, even creating prayers at times within a sick bed, on the dining table, or in the living room.

Family prayer leadership is primarily based on the role of parents. According to many respondents, fathers are considered the main spiritual head who opens and closes the family prayer time, particularly in families with a father who is present and active in church life. Meanwhile, many families emphasise the importance of mothers as the regular guardians of prayer practice, that is, those who remind, convene, and coax the family to pray, especially when time is limited or family members are exhausted. Other families use a system of rotating leadership in which the oldest child is the first to be given leadership to prepare them to express prayers and take up responsibility. This communal leadership trend is commonly termed a measure to create trust, spiritual maturity, and the assurance that prayer is not the sole duty of an individual.

In general, these tendencies indicate that family prayer in GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten is a practice that continues to be structurally encoded despite the demands of modern life. It is not only contextualised by church teaching and tradition, but also by the internal structure of the home, routine, and the unspoken demands that are exchanged among the family members.

2. Family Prayer as the Place of Thankfulness, Reunion, and Faith in Tough Times

In addition to its regularity and structure, family prayer is characterised by respondents as a relational and meaningful space. Most of them recognised prayer as a thanksgiving activity, a deliberate effort to recognise the goodness, protection, and provision of God amidst daily problems. In this context, it is possible to view family prayer as a remedy for anxiety and a practice that does not allow the family to take the gifts of life as something natural.

Simultaneously, the respondents also highly associate prayer with unity and affection. Togetherness in praying is also perceived as a practical way of taking care of each other: sitting in one space, letting their voices be heard, calling each other by the name of their needs before God, family members become both emotionally closer and more intertwined. Some of the stories highlight how children learn to hear the anxieties and dreams of their parents during the process of praying, and parents learn to hear the way their children understand school, friendship, and life online through the language of petition and thanksgiving. To most families, these are the moments that are referred to as the only time during a hectic day when all the people slow down and forget about screens and are in the full presence of God and each other.

The space of dependence and trust in prayer is also seen as an aspect that is required, especially during crises. Prayer is a common response described by the respondents since it is a way of leaving unresolved problems, fears, and conflicts to God. This involves the prayer of those who are ill, financial hardships, school or work disputes, as well as social media pressures or ethical issues affecting the youth. In these circumstances, prayer is more of a demand on God to do something, but also a ritual of dealing with feelings, showing how vulnerable the family is and reminding them that it is not the only one.

Although this is a very positive picture, the respondents are quite conscious that the tradition is fragile. Some of the most commonly cited issues include parent-child conflicts caused by different schedules, tiredness due to long working hours, and the lure of electronic entertainment that is easily nudged by the way of prayer into the background of the evening routine. Other families have observed that as children get older and become more active in school, youth fellowships, or online communities, it is more difficult to find time to pray together. Others cite internal family conflicts, that is, the unresolved conflicts between parents or conflicts between generations, as making prayer formalised, forced, or emotionally detached.

To address these dilemmas, the respondents suggested several measures to sustain the tradition. They emphasise the need to have a schedule of prayer that is clear and agreed upon, parental consistency and example, and creative adaptations that include children in selecting verses in the Bible or songs, or allow a small part of Minahasan culture to be incorporated, such as sharing responsibilities in leading the prayers, like in *mapalus*. There is also an argument that the church plays a bigger part in providing practical resources to the family, such as simple liturgies, devotional resources, and pastoral support. These recommendations indicate that the congregation does not sit back and watch family prayer being eroded but wants practical means and mechanisms for its survival through the generations.

Discussion

The results of this study validate the main thesis in the background that in the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation, family prayer continues to be a crucial site of spiritual formation, relational connection, and cultural and theological identity as it is ever more influenced by contemporary social and technological forces. The findings by analysing the patterns as well as the perceived meaning of family prayer are enlightening on how an ostensibly simple ritual in the home can confer a multifaceted room of inculturation, resilience, and negotiation between tradition and modernity.

1. Prayer as a Family as *Ecclesia Domestica* under the New Social Landscape

Theologically, family prayer remains present in the congregation, which is a strong argument in favour of the concept of the family as *ecclesia domestica* or the domestic church, which GMIM ecclesial documents, as well as theological discourse in general, emphasise (Banarto & Siringoringo, 2020.; Simanjuntak, 2025). The routine cycles of prayer, particularly in the evening, before dinner, or in times of crisis, show that not all families depend on congregational worship as the main source of their spiritual life but personally develop a liturgical micro-space at home.

This trend follows earlier research that claims that home is one of the main places where faith is passed and character is shaped (Ta'birampo et al., 2023; Tibo, 2018). In the Minahasan case, the home is a personal space as well as a culturally significant space where kinship, hospitality, and community identity are practiced. In the process of prayer, a family, when gathered together, symbolically reconstructs itself as a small community of worship, reflecting the larger liturgical life of GMIM and putting it in the context of daily interests.

Nevertheless, this is not a given reality, as in the present study, which contradicts purely normative theological accounts. It is continuously negotiated in the framing of work schedules, school needs, digital media, and developing generational expectations. The fact that these pressures are deliberately noted by the respondents indicates that the tradition of family prayer is not perceived as something that is valued and delicate but one that needs to be nurtured and not inherited.

The results of the study on leadership in family prayer indicate a curious interaction between conventional and changing roles. On the one hand, the trend of fathers being accepted as the main leaders is consistent with the old Christian and Minahasan expectations regarding the role of the father as the head of the family and spiritual guardian. This upholds the theological ideal that the guidance of the family in prayer is the responsibility of parents.

Conversely, the role of mothers as the constant protectors of prayer that the respondents highlight points to a more subtle truth. The mother recalls the schedule, calls for the collection, and creates a warm atmosphere of emotions during prayer, even when the father is speaking in the lead at home. This is in agreement with other Indonesian settings, where the invisible labour of maintaining religious activities at home is often placed on women (Sihombing, 2019; Lumentut, 2021). Instead of taking this as a contradiction, we can envision it as a complementary partnership: fathers and mothers have their own responsibilities, but in different and equally important ways.

Of interest is the practice of rotating leadership among children. This implies a deliberate pedagogical aspect: children are not only welcomed to be present but also to talk, guide, and own the conversation between the family and God. This leadership exchange between generations also

corresponds to the emphasis on family prayers as a tool for faith transmission by Klaassen (2018). When children have the responsibility of leading prayer, they learn how to express theology using their own language, internalise the language of the Bible, and feel valued in the spiritual life of the family. This is because these practices can help the church to become resilient to secularizing forces (SiRegaR, 2023), specifically because such practices result in active, not passive, involvement.

2. Prayer as Relational Space: Gratitude, Vulnerability, and Emotional Communion

One of the most important contributions of this work is the emphasis on family prayer as a doctrine or ritual duty, but also as an interpersonal and emotional sphere. Respondents always referred to prayer as a tangible expression of gratitude, fellowship, and caring. This implies that family prayer functions as an emotional liturgy, whereby family members declare their fears, hopes, and everyday lives in the presence of each other before God.

This approach intensifies the pastoral interpretation of prayer. It is not merely a spiritual obligation that needs to be fulfilled, but an act of susceptibility and intercession to each other that glues the family. Children feel loved and secure when they hear their parents pray on their behalf. Parents should hear the prayers of their children because it allows them to understand their internal space: what they are concerned about at school, how they perceive friendship, and how they explain the digital space. Exposure to each other has the potential to enhance empathy and trust and narrow generational gaps, which are commonly expanded by technology and mobility.

This aspect of family prayer can be viewed in the context of a miniature space of relational reconciliation. Although conflicts might not be completely resolved prior to prayer, the very fact that they are sharing the act of coming to God, albeit on a small but considerable scale, can produce a temporary suspension of hostility, a small but important gesture that does not mean that the relationship has been given up on. In the long term, these gestures can lead to forgiveness and healing.

Another valuable aspect that the findings can shed light on is the incorporation of Minahasan values into family prayer. The ideas of *mapalus* (mutual cooperation), *walewangko* (family deliberation), and *masarang* (togetherness) offer a cultural grammar to comprehend what occurs when families pray. The rotation or sharing of leadership in prayer is a *mapalus*-type distribution of responsibility: all participate in the spiritual well-being of the house. When prayer is a place where family members talk about issues, make decisions together, or consult God on a conflict, it resembles *walewangko*, a custom of sitting together and discussing issues. When the respondents talk of the warmth, closeness, and oneness they feel when praying, they are actually talking about *masarang* in its spiritual sense. Such dynamics empirically validate Nababan and Silaban (2025) in another context, that local culture, shaped by the filter of biblical values, can be very fruitful in the context of Christian spirituality. Instead of considering culture as a danger, this study demonstrates that Minahasan values may be carriers of theological significance. The family prayer turns out to be a place where the Gospel is not just preached but acted out in culturally understandable forms. Simultaneously, the Gospel also criticises and reforms culture, for example, by opposing patriarchal structures that prevent women and children from being involved in leadership.

Although the picture is generally positive, when it comes to the obstacles in their lives, the respondents say that the tradition of family prayer cannot be idealised. The most frequent obstacles are busy schedules, exhaustion, digital distractions, and internal family conflicts, which are not specific to GMIM but are more generalised structural aspects of modern life. Urbanising and digitalising lifestyles are more likely to divide time and attention in the language of Utomo et al. (2025), which makes it challenging to have unhurried time to reflect on life and worship.

These pressures collide with the socio-economic realities of the congregants in the case of Eben Haezer Kaaten with a *jemaat pinggiran*. Families can be economically precarious, have long working hours, and lack access to resources, which can decrease the energy reserves for any deliberate spiritual practice. Moreover, unresolved conflicts in the family might make prayer seem formal or hypocritical, and thus some members may not be emotionally involved, especially the youth. This is what Ruata (2025) points out as the failure to observe the lived social realities of the congregants, which would make pastoral strategies abstract and detached.

It is important to identify these challenges to have a realistic pastoral response. To continue family prayer, church leaders cannot just ask families to pray more; they need to deal with the circumstances that render prayer challenging. This involves promoting a better health work-life balance, conflict management and forgiveness, practical teachings on how to use digital media in a manner that promotes, not diminishes, spiritual practices.

The suggestions made by the respondents themselves in terms of keeping the tradition alive were directed towards a number of specific pastoral approaches. To begin with, focusing on clear and agreed-upon schedules means that pastoral teaching must assist families in creating realistic and adaptable patterns of prayer. Instead of glorifying long, lengthy, and non-sustainable devotions, the church can persuade the adoption of short, regular practices, which are adjusted to be in time with each household. Second, the example of parents implies that leadership training is not only to be applied to professional church office but also to extend to parents as daily liturgists within the home. The way fathers and mothers can lead simple prayers, engage children, and relate Scripture and daily life can be explicitly taught through sermons, seminars, and small groups. This also involves acknowledging and appreciating the invisible work of mothers in keeping the prayer going, as well as motivating fathers to become more involved.

Third, as a result of the significance of the involvement of children, the educational ministries of GMIM (Sunday school, youth fellowships, and catechesis) can be specifically connected with family prayer. An example would be the provision of children with simple liturgies, memory verses, or even song suggestions to carry home and thus make them agents of liturgical renewal in their respective families. This establishes a reciprocal relationship between church and home: what is studied in church is practiced at home, and what is done at home can be discussed and imagined in church. Fourth, the incorporation of Minahasan cultural values in the prayer will provide a chance for the creative inculturation of liturgy. Families can be sensitised to include the aspects of *mapalus* and *walewangko* in their prayer life, such as sharing the responsibilities of reading the Scripture, leading in the intercessions, or preparing simple symbolic activities as a sign of local culture. Not only does this enhance the sense of identity, but it also shows that Christian faith does not annul culture; on the contrary, it redeems and reorients culture.

Finally, the congregation and the GMIM synod can develop pastoral policies and materials which clearly address family prayer. This can involve creating contextual devotional booklets, digital material that can be competitive to secular materials, and incorporating family prayer themes in church yearly programs. The church should consider the importance of family prayer as a strategy priority, not just a personal issue, but family prayer is the plank that holds the domestic aspect of ecclesial life.

3. Theoretical Contributions, Limitations, and Future Research

In theory, the present research has several contributions to the development of contextual theology and pastoral studies in Indonesia. First, it transcends normative descriptions of family spirituality by incorporating theological, anthropological, and pastoral perspectives and considers the empirical richness of the lived practice (Febrianto, 2020). Second, by implicating a marginal congregation and not an urban or synod-centred church, it challenges the implicit assumption of most research that puts a centre of focus on more visible or more resourced communities. Third, in its concept of family prayer as a site of inculturation of faith, it presents a conceptual instrument for exploring how the local culture and Christian spirituality influence each other in the home environment.

However, several restrictions must be considered. The research will be based on survey data collected through self-report and ethnographic observations, which are context-specific to GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten; thus, the study cannot be blindly generalised to all GMIM congregations and other denominational settings. There is also the potential that social desirability bias influences a respondent towards giving a perfect image of his/her prayer habits. Furthermore, the qualitative orientation provides a chance to describe the data but does not provide an accurate quantification of the prevalence of specific patterns. Further studies can overcome these limitations through a combination of qualitative ethnography and well-developed quantitative indicators for more than one congregation.

More intensive research might also provide additional insight into the experience of individual subgroups, such as single parents, mixed religion, or families where members are separated through migration. Along with this, a comparative study of Minahasan and non-Minahasan congregations might enhance our perception of how specific cultural values influence the style and meaning of family prayer. The results and discussion outline that in GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten, the practice of family prayer is not a relic of the past, as it remains a living and opposing phenomenon that cultivates faith, shapes relationships, and reflects Minahasan Christian identity.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the ritual of family prayer among the GMIM Eben Haezer Kaaten congregation is still an important, albeit delicate, element of family spirituality and community belonging. Family prayer is not an outlived and highly formalised rite but is deliberately incorporated into the daily lifestyle of the household, particularly during the evenings and at mealtimes, as well as being brought into play during times of crisis. The family is also an *ecclesia domestica*, where faith is told, lived, and passed down through generations in these mundane but theologically imbued practices.

The results show that family prayer leadership is shared in subtle forms. Fathers are supposed to be the spiritual leaders of the house, and most of the time, mothers are the perpetual protectors of the discipline, as they make sure that prayer is literally done amidst hectic times. The fact that children are included as prayer leaders also shows a deliberate approach to intergenerational formation, so that the children of the younger generation can absorb the language of Christianity, values, and reliance on God. Meanwhile, the incorporation of Minahasan cultural values, including *mapalus*, *walewangko*, and *masarang*, indicates that family prayer is another privileged place of cultural inculturation, in which local concepts of mutual cooperation, deliberation, and companionship are reenacted in the perspective of the Gospel.

However, the study also revealed the major stressors which jeopardise the survival of the practice, such as work burnout, school-related demands, online interruptions, and familial conflict resolution. These difficulties indicate that family prayer cannot be maintained by exhortation alone; rather, it should be realistically scheduled, have policies that are conducive to the situation in the ecclesiastical, and pastoral accompaniment that is also context-dependent. This study, through its ethnographic participatory approach and a combination of theological, anthropological, and pastoral views, will add to the more holistic view of family prayer as a place of spiritual fortitude as well as a contentious practice in modern Minahasan Christianity. The conclusions are an invitation to GMIM and indeed to other churches to make the reinforcement of domestic prayer not a secondary matter, but a strategic priority for maintaining faith, fostering relationships, and resisting the disintegrating tendencies of life in the modern world. Future studies may also consider this question with regard to other congregations and family structures, thus narrowing the pastoral approach or deepening topical, situational-based theologies of family spirituality.

REFERENCES

- Adji, T. P. (2024). Desain Penelitian Kualitatif. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, 27, A27-dq.
- Badrudin, S. (2023). *Sosiologi Keluarga: Dinamika dan Tantangan Masyarakat Modern*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- Banarto, K., & Siringoringo, M. (n.d.). *Dilematika Pelayanan Pastoral Antara Kristus, Keluarga, Dan Jemaat*.
- Baskoro, P. K., & Budiyan, H. (2021). Membangun Pola Pengajaran Melalui Mezbah Keluarga Sebagai Gaya Hidup Keluarga Kristen Masa Kini. *THRONOS: Jurnal Teologi Kristen*, 2(2), 103–114.
- Christina, S., Brek, Y., & Karosekali, E. (2024). Strategi Pastoral Konseling terhadap keluarga yang tidak harmonis dan mendukung keluarga dalam masa krisis. *DELAHA: Journal of Theological Sciences*, 1(2), 1–10.

- Febrianto, M. D. (2020). Berteologi Multidisipliner Dan Interkultural Di Zaman Migrasi. *Jurnal Teologi*, 1, 49–68.
- Kartini, A., & Maulana, A. (2020). Model Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Keluarga. *An-Nisa Journal of Gender Studies*, 13(2), 231–253.
- Kaunang, T. I. P., Parauba, A. Y., Maradesa, E. M., & Larungkondo, R. (2024). Misi Kristen dalam Melestarikan dan Memanfaatkan Budaya Mapalus sebagai sarana Moderasi Beragama di Minahasa. *THEOSEBIA: Journal of Theology, Christian Religious Education and Psychospiritual*, 1(2), 49–61.
- Lumbantobing, S. (2024). Psikologi spiritual mencari makna dan kesejahteraan dalam spiritualitas. *Circle Archive*, 1(4).
- Mu'asyara, N., Merhan, M., Ulfa, R., Arfandi, M. F., Yurike, A., Fattah, M. O., Imas, I., CA, V. A., & Anggina, T. D. (2024). Transformasi Identitas Religius dan Spiritualitas dalam Era Sekularisasi: Perspektif Sosiologi Agama. *Concept: Journal of Social Humanities and Education*, 3(4), 254–265.
- Nababan, J. S., & Silaban, G. H. S. (2025). Pengaruh Budaya Lokal Terhadap Pertumbuhan Ima dan Partisipasi Jemaat Dalam Pelayanan Gereja: Studi di Jemaat Gekisia Tanjung. *Jurnal Sosial Teknologi*, 5(10), 4073–4080.
- Ndruru, R., & Pardosi, M. T. (2024). Pengaruh formula pendidikan keluarga Kristen dalam menghadapi dampak negatif globalisasi. *Harati: Jurnal Pendidikan Kristen*, 4(1), 54–67.
- Nendissa, J. E., Farneyanan, S., Sampepadang, R. D. P., Rares, F. M., & Senduk, H. J. E. (2025). Teologi Minahasa dalam Perspektif Kontekstual: Integrasi Nilai Budaya Lokal dan Keimanan Kristen. *Jurnal Socius: Journal of Sociology Research and Education*, 12(1), 52–63.
- Rosmita, E., Sampe, P. D., Adji, T. P., Shufa, N. K. F., Haya, N., Isnaini, I., Taroreh, F. J. H., Wongkar, V. Y., Honandar, I. R., & Rottie, R. F. I. (2024). *Metode penelitian kualitatif*. CV. Gita Lentera.
- Ruata, J. L. (2025). Integration of Christian Religious Education Approaches in Modern Society: Sociological and Anthropological Perspectives. *Logon Zoes: Jurnal Teologi, Sosial, Dan Budaya*, 8(1), 74–85.
- Simanjuntak, H. (2025). Pilar-Pilar Doa Menurut Efesus 3: 14-21. *Jurnal Teologi Trinity*, 2(2), 1–13.
- SiRegaR, O. R. (2023). Mystical union sebagai formasi iman generasi Z: Pendidikan Kristiani berbasis kontemplasi sebagai sarana pembentukan iman yang otentik bagi generasi Z di tengah dunia sekuler. *Aradha: Journal of Divinity, Peace and Conflict Studies*, 3(3), 215–235.
- Ta'birampo, W., Nengsi, N., Taburang, A., & Paressa, W. (2023). Teologi Kristen dan dinamika hubungan keluarga: Suatu kajian literatur pembentukan nilai-nilai keluarga. *HUMANITIS: Jurnal Homaniora, Sosial Dan Bisnis*, 1(4), 427–436.
- Tafuli, A. N., Ninu, I., Saingu, S. N. U., Liu, A. S., & Saetban, C. (2025). Pendidikan Karakter Kristen dalam Keluarga. *Sukacita: Jurnal Pendidikan Iman Kristen*, 2(3), 89–106.
- Tibo, P. (2018). Praktik Hidup Doa Dalam Keluarga Sebagai Gereja Rumah Tangga. *Jurnal Masalah Pastoral*, 6(1), 62–85.
- Utomo, J., Abdullah, S., Rohman, P., & Arlini, L. (2025). Educating Faith Amid Algorithms (A Case Study of Intergenerational Relations in Urban Families of Mataram City). *12 Waiheru*, 11(2), 146–156.