

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Prayer, Praise & Thanksgiving

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Secrets of Prayer (Part A)

Reading:
1 Kings Chapter 8

1. Introduction

Hundreds of millions of prayers are voiced each day by people in all lands. Were you to closely investigate the results of those prayers you would probably discover that most remain unanswered. That is why millions of people have stopped praying to God. **"He doesn't answer my prayers"** they say. Or **"Perhaps he doesn't even exist, so why bother to pray."** A typical response would be: **"I was sincere. I had a good case. I presented my case to God in fervent prayer. But God didn't answer. So I've stopped praying, because prayer doesn't work. In fact I often doubt if God exists."**

Is that the case with you? Have you arrived at a spiritual dead-end in your life where you doubt if God even exists? Check through the things you have recently asked for and see how many of your prayers have been answered. Yes, be ruthless with yourself and examine your prayer **performance** and the **results**. This morning we will examine a few secrets of prayer, those mandatory, spiritual parameters without which meaningful results in prayer are not possible.

2. Direction

In the physical field **'direction'** means north, south, east or west; the way you are facing, pointing or going. Direction is the link between your present physical position and your destination. In the spiritual field 'direction' means motives, aims and objectives. Your spiritual 'direction' can be determined by asking yourself a few simple questions. What is my true motive, my spiritual standpoint? Am I looking asking for the good of the kingdom of heaven or are my interests self-centred? The Apostle James says this:

James 4: 3: ***"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."***

Destination

Where do I want to go? What is my objective? **WHY** am I praying this particular prayer? What do I hope to receive or accomplish? To establish your objective is far more important than establishing your standpoint. And so I ask myself: **"What is my spiritual goal, my objective?"**

We will now examine this matter of **‘spiritual objectives’** in Solomon's prayer, noting carefully the spiritual **‘circumstances’** and **‘direction’** in each example. Especially note Solomon's words **“towards this place” (city & land), and “towards this house.”**

1 Kings 8: 28: *“Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day:
29: That thine eyes may be open **toward this house** night and day, even **toward the place** of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make **toward this place**.
30: And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray **toward this place**: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.”*

Daniel's example

Daniel 6: 10: *“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber **toward Jerusalem**, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”*

NOTE: To face Jerusalem means to have one's spiritual compass lined up with Yahweh's cause, His Temple, His message and His law. It means to turn one's back on sin and its captivating influence and to set your sights on the high calling of God. As Paul said:

Philippians 3: 14: *“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*

3. Repentance / Confession

Repentance, confession and turning away from sin are mandatory requirements for those who want their prayers answered. Those who refuse to give up sin seldom have their prayers answered. The Bible tells us that the prayer of a blatant sinner (one who refuses to obey the Most High) is an abomination to God. But the repentant sinner who approaches God with a humble and contrite heart will find an audience: God will accept such a person. God will answer his/her prayers.

Proverbs 28: 9: *“**He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.**”*

Psalm 51: 17: *“**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.**”*

Confession

Before prayers can be answered we must confess our sins **to God** and then forsake those sins. Confessing sins to a priest is not a Bible teaching. It is a human tradition which has caused untold harm to millions. Confession must be made to God; or, if another person is involved, to that person. Confession to be accepted must also be followed by a changed life. For more information see **Confession to God or Priest?**

1 Kings 8: 33: *“When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and **confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee** in this house:
34: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.”*

Spread forth their hands

The hands represent **‘actions.’** Spreading forth one's hands towards Yahweh's Temple in heaven implies a deep yearning for His cause and His help.

1 Kings 8: 22: *“And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and **spread forth his hands toward heaven.**”*

In Drought / Famine / Disease & War

1 Kings 8: 35: “When heaven is shut up, and there is **no rain**, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:
36: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.
37: If there be in the land **famine**, if there be **pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust**, or if there be caterpillar; if their **enemy besiege them** in the land of their cities; **whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness** there be.”

Whatever the Sin

1 Kings 8: 38: “What prayer and supplication soever be made by **any man**, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house:
39: Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)
40: That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.”

Believing Strangers

Strangers are also welcome in the church (Yahweh's house). All they need to do is worship the Most High with sincerity of heart. They will be made welcome.

1 Kings 8: 41: “Moreover concerning a **stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake**;
42: (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house;
43: Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and **do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for**: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.”

Total Commitment

Half-hearted worship, however, will not accomplish much. The Almighty requires total commitment, that we return to Him with “**all our heart and soul**.”

1 Kings 8: 44: “If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name:
45: Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.
46: If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;
47: Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;
48: **And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul**, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:
49: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause,
50: And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:
51: For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the

midst of the furnace of iron:"

4. Summary

The lessons we can learn from Solomon's prayer are valid today. They tell us that there is absolutely no situation - however hopeless - in which a believer cannot send up a prayer to the Most High. Certain requirements however must be met if meaningful results are to be obtained. They are:

- One must have the right motives.
- Confess **Yahweh's name**. This means to acknowledge **His holy character as expressed in His law**.
- **Repent** of known sins and **confess** them to God - **not to a priest**.
- Determine to **obey** the Almighty. **Obedience is a vital prerequisite to answered prayer**.
- Spread forth one's hands towards Yahweh's house. (support His cause)
- Total commitment. **Half-hearted** service accomplishes little.

If these conditions are met, no problem - however serious - is too much for the Almighty to remedy.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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