

The Temple – A House of Prayer

Old Testament

Summary: Much of the Old Testament’s emphasis on prayer is weakened because the OT uses a rich variety of terms to refer to prayer.

1. First mention of the people of God in Genesis 4:26: “At that time people began to *call upon* the name of the LORD.”
2. Abraham – “From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and *called upon the name of the LORD.*” Genesis 12:8
3. Book of Psalms: A Book of Prayers. First prayer book of the church.
4. Solomon dedicates the Temple as a House of Prayer—1 Kings 8:22-53.

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! **Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.**

1st “If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, **then hear in heaven and act** and judge your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

2nd “When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and **if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, then hear in heaven** and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers.

3rd “When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, **if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their**

sin, when you afflict them, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.

4th “If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house, [39] then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways ... that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.

5th “Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.

6th “If your people go out to battle against their enemy ... and they pray to the LORD toward the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, then hear in heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause.

7th “If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, ‘We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,’ ... then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you ... Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant and to the plea of your people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to you.

5. Isaiah’s expansion in Isaiah 56:7: “For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”
6. *On a day-to-day, functional basis, prayer is what makes Israel, Israel.* Other nations had gods, temples, priests, sacrifices, laws, divination and even a sense of divine uniqueness. But Israel’s God, the Creator-God, heard his people. Isaiah writes, “Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.” (Isaiah 64:4)

New Testament—House of Prayer

Red = Jesus praying Purple = Jesus exhorting us to community prayer
Light Green = church leader praying Green = church prayer meeting

Luke—Jesus Part 1

1. 1:10, “And the whole multitude of the people were **praying** outside at the hour of incense.”
2. 1:13, “But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your **prayer** has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.’”
3. 2:37, “She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and **prayer** night and day.”
4. 3:21, “Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was **praying**, the heavens were opened and the **Holy Spirit** descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, ‘**You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.**’”
5. 5:16, “But he would withdraw to desolate places and **pray**.”
6. 6:12, “In these days he went out to the mountain to **pray**, and all night he continued in **prayer** to God.”
7. 6:28, “bless those who curse you, **pray** for those who abuse you.”
8. 9:18, “Now it happened that as he was **praying** alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, ‘Who do the crowds say that I am?’”
9. 9:28-35, “Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to **pray**. And as he was **praying**, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in **glory** and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. . . . And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘**This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!**’”

10. 10:2, “And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore **pray** earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”
11. 11:1-14, “Now Jesus was **praying in a certain place**, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to **pray**, as John taught his disciples.’ ² “And he said to them, ‘When you **pray**, say:
- “Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
³ Give us each day our daily bread,
⁴ and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And lead us not into temptation.”
12. 11:5-8, “And he said to them, ‘Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, “Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him”; and he will answer from within, “Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything”? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.
13. 11:9-13, “And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”
14. 18:1-9, “And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to **pray** and not lose heart. ² He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, “Give me justice against my adversary.” ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, “Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.”’ ⁶ And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?’”

15. 18:10-11, “Two men went up into the temple to **pray**, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, **prayed** thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.’”
16. 19:46, “saying to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be a house of **prayer**,” but you have made it a den of robbers.’”
17. 20:47, “who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long **prayers**.”
18. 21:36, “But stay awake at all times, **praying** that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”
19. 22:31-32, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have **prayed** for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”
20. 22:40-46, ⁴⁰ “And when he came to the place, he said to them, ‘**Pray** that you may not enter into temptation.’ ⁴¹ And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and **prayed**, ⁴² saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’ ⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony he **prayed** more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵ And when he rose from **prayer**, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Rise and **pray** that you may not enter into temptation.’”
21. 23:34, “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”
22. 23:46, “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last.”

Acts—Jesus Part 2

1. 1:14, “All these with one accord were devoting themselves to **prayer**, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” DNA of the church.
2. 1:24, “And they **prayed** and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen...” Selecting leaders.

3. 2:1-4, “When the day of Pentecost arrived, they **were all together in one place**. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
4. 2:42, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the **prayers**.” One of four main qualities of a church.
5. 3:1, “Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” Jewish pattern of three set times a day of prayer.
6. 4:31, “And when they had **prayed**, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.”
7. 6:4, “But we will devote ourselves to **prayer** and to the ministry of the word.” Half of a pastor's job description.
8. 6:6, “These they set before the apostles, and they **prayed** and laid their hands on them.” Selecting leaders.
9. 8:15, “who came down and **prayed** for them that they might receive **the Holy Spirit**...” For new converts.
10. 8:24, “And Simon answered, ‘**Pray** (pl.) for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.’” Prayer for repentance.
11. 9:11, “And the Lord said to him, ‘Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is **praying**...’” A praying leader.
12. 9:14, 21, “And here he [Paul] has authority from the chief priests to bind all who **call on your name**. . . . And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who **called upon this name**?”” Recalls Genesis 4.
13. 9:40 ⁴⁰ “But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and **prayed**; and turning to the body he said, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.” Leader prays for healing.

14. 10:2, “a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and **prayed** continually to God.”
15. 10:4 “And he stared at him in terror and said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ And he said to him, ‘Your **prayers** and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.’” Hearing God in private prayer.
16. 10:9, “The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to **pray**.” Peter hears God in private prayer.
17. 10:30-31, “And Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago, about this hour, I was **praying** in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, ‘Cornelius, your **prayer** has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.’”” Hearing God.
18. 11:5 “I was in the city of Joppa **praying**, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me.” Peter hears God in private prayer.
19. 12:5. “So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest **prayer** for him was made to God by the church.” 24-hour prayer meeting for deliverance from evil.
20. 12:12, “When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were **praying**.”
21. 13:2-3, “While they were **worshiping the Lord and fasting**, the **Holy Spirit** said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and **praying** they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”
22. 14:23, “And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with **prayer** and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Selecting leaders.
23. 16:13, 16 “And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of **prayer**, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. . . . As we were going to the place of **prayer**, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by

fortune-telling.” Pattern of Temple as the house of prayer. The people of God gathering is a “place of prayer.”

24. 16:25, “About midnight Paul and Silas were **praying** and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them...earthquake....” Praying in deep suffering.
25. 20:36, “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and **prayed** with them all.” Praying as beloved friends depart.
26. 21:5, “When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we **prayed**.” Praying as beloved friends depart.
27. 22:17, “When I had returned to Jerusalem and was **praying** in the temple, I fell into a trance...” Hearing God in private prayer.
28. 27:29, “And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and **prayed** for day to come.” A praying leader prays for his community in stress.
29. 28:8, “It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and **prayed**, and putting his hands on him, healed him.” A praying leader.

Summary

1st - Solomon’s Temple = A house of prayer

2nd - Jesus’s Life (Luke) = Jesus has become the house of prayer.

3rd - The church (Acts) = The body of Christ, the new temple, is now the house of prayer.