

# PRAYER and FAMILY ALTARS

## Genesis 12:1-8

WTM Archives

### What is a Prayer Altar?

A place and a time you set apart to draw the presence of God and commune with the Lord. We are told in Acts 3:1 Peter and John went at a specific time to pray at the temple. Reading John 18:1-2, we find that Judas was able to locate Jesus and bring the Roman soldiers to arrest him, because Jesus had a specific place of prayer. It is interesting to note that Jesus prayed for three hours before he was arrested. In Daniel 6:10, we are told that Daniel had a place and time for prayer three times a day.

*The prayer altar is the place where we draw the presence of God.* The altar is ground you claim for God. It is the place where we surrender and give to God control. Your personal altar is your heart. It is the first territory you need to claim for God. When you make your heart an altar for God, the spiritual climate in your heart begins to change. Failure to do so, a spiritual toxic spiritual environment is created. One of the biggest dangers in our walk with God is learning the principles of God and not drawing the presence of God into our lives. So many children today in Christian homes end up growing without knowing God in a personal way and family time together with the Lord, and not experiencing God's presence. *Personal Prayer Altars and Family altars are the foundation of revival.*

### Four different types of prayer altars

There are different type of prayer altars. The first is a *personal altar*. This is where commune alone with God. We spend quality time one on one with the King of the universe. This is where you take time to worship, pray and read the word.

The second type of prayer altar is the *family altar*. The family altar is when the family comes together to draw the presence of God into their home. If you have not started a family altar, you are strongly encouraged to start one right away. Even if some members of your family don't want to join, we encourage to start with those who are willing. Sooner or later, others in your family will join. This is a great way to claim your home for the Lord. This is where you contend for your family members and fight in the Spirit for each family member in your family who is not serving God. If no one in your family does not want to join you in your family altar time, simply make a loving invitation and proceed to have it without them. Let room for God to work in their lives. It make take weeks or months, but stand firm in standing for your family in prayer. Testimonies worldwide are pouring in of the thousands of family members who are now coming to the Lord through family altars.

The third type of prayer altar is the *corporate prayer altar*. This is when the church as a whole come together to pray on a weekly basis. There is something powerful which occurs when the church comes together to pray and to seek the Lord. It is very difficult to find a chapter in the book of Acts where the New Testament church was not praying together. The church began and receive the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a prayer meeting (Acts 1:14). Make up your mind this week to join a corporate prayer altar in your church. Jesus is awaiting for his people to look for him as he is awaiting for them in the house of God (Revelations 1:12-13, 20).

The fourth type of prayer altar is the *prayer wall*. The prayer wall is when churches come together to pray for their city or state. This type of prayer altar may involve one representative from each church in a community coming to pray for the specific strongholds and grip of darkness holding back the kingdom of God from moving forward in that city or state.

The key towards having an effective family altar, corporate altar and prayer wall is to have a personal prayer altar. Failure to have a personal altar is like trying to burn wood which is still "green". All it will do is produce smoke!

### **Why do we need prayer altars?**

Since God created man, his desire was to have continuous communion with man. Out of this close communion with the presence of God, man was able to fulfill his purpose to be fruitful, multiply and have dominion (Genesis 1:26-28). Since God created man in His image, man was able to commune with his creator. We find from Genesis 3:8 that it was the practice of God to visit Adam in the garden. God had created within man, through the image of God, a holy attraction towards God. The garden of Eden became the center of God's presence on earth. But after man fell (Genesis 3), sin made man repel the will of God. God in his loving care for man, turned him away from the garden. He did not want man to eat of the tree of life, lest he stayed in a perpetual state of sinfulness (Genesis 3:24). God wanted man to have uninterrupted fellowship with man, and thus he made a plan for one day through the "seed" of Eve to have victory over Satan and redeem mankind from their sins (Genesis 3:15). After mankind was expelled from the garden of Eden, mankind kept distancing himself from the presence of the Lord, thus becoming restless and on his own (Genesis 4:13-16).

Prayer altars is one of the way of establishing and claim a life, family, region or even nation for the Lord. We find after Abraham is told to go to a land he has never been before, that he set up an altar to the Lord (Genesis 12:7). The very first thing he did and what he always did whenever he went to a new region or territory was to build an altar. The only time you see him not build an altar was in Egypt because force of darkness had intimidated him. In Genesis 13:4, we find that Abraham did not settle in one place. but he went throughout the land and build an altar. We are also told in Genesis 12:6 that the Canaanites were in the land. The enemy was in the land. When Abraham came upon this territory, he was contending for it. There was a spiritual contention taking place. His solution for contending for the land was to set up a prayer altar upon it.

Altars in the bible are often denoted as a place where we draw the presence of God in a place. We find Abel build an altar of sacrifice which drew and pleased God (Genesis 4:4, 7). The very first thing Noah did when he got out of the ark after the flood was to build an altar. God came and was so pleased that he made a covenant with Noah to never destroy every living creature through a flood. Elijah, while contending with the false prophet of Baal, was able to draw the fiery presence of God and reestablish God's authority and dominion on Israel (I King 18:20-35). In Exodus 25:1-9, we are told that sacrifices were to be made at the altar to attract the presence of God (Exodus 29:18). In Romans 12:1-2, we are urged to present ourselves as a living sacrifice in our personal altars as an act of worship which pleases God. The plan of God was always for us to abide with him (John 15:4), for we cannot be effective nor fruitful without Him.

We are told in Isaiah 25:7 that a sheet of darkness is covering the nations today, which is causing the people of the nations to turn away from God (Ephesians 6:12). This "veil" of darkness away pushes against the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Prayer altars is one of the ways to break through this wall of darkness. It sets up the church in advancing the kingdom of God to break through the gates of hell in a region.

It is always amazing to watch children always long for the presence of a loving parent. Little children get "separation anxiety" when they are way from their mother or father. Jesus told us that we are to emulate and be like little children in our walk with God (Mark 10:13-15). We are to desire the Father of glory like children desire to be with their mother and father. Children can only feel complete security and safety in the presence of their parents. Just like when children don't see or hear their father around and say "Where is father?", so we also be saying "where is Father God?" and look for Him through prayer.

Prayer altars does not give God any "rest". It is a place where we continually seek God. It is a place where we pray "without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17) and knock at the gate of heaven "at all times" (Luke 18:1-8). God is looking for a his people to "cry to Him day and night" (v. 7). God is looking for every heart to be a brazing fire of prayer, every family a prayer altar, every church a prayer cell, every city a prayer wall and every nation a prayer net which draws the presence of God.

## **What happens at the altar?**

### **1. You minister to the Lord**

Many Christians don't know they have the privilege to minister to the Lord. In I Chronicles 15:2 we are told that " Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever". The Levites were to minister to the Lord in the temple. In 2 Chronicles 13:10 we are also told that "But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the sons of Aaron are ministering to the LORD as priests, and the Levites attend to their work" . In the New Testament

we are told " As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). We often think of God ministering to his people, but there is a place in our walk with God where we minister to him where he is exalted. Even in the Lord prayer, we see the first half dealing with focusing on praising and worshipping God.

In the prayer altar the first thing we want to do is spend a substantial amount of time worshipping God. Worshipping him for who he is and not just what he has done. There is nothing worst than half worship. In the personal or family altars, we want to start with exalting who God is and not with a list of "God do this for me right now". In heaven a man is not measure by his wealth and fans, but by his worship. It has been said that "worship is not a means to an end but the end of all means!" The whole point of everything we do is to worship God. This is why worship begins in the inside of you, that is, your heart. Why? Because your heart is the most valuable thing you can give to God.

There will be times during your prayer and family altars that you will begin to have distractions or a voice that begins to tell you that it is not worth worshipping God. The enemy of your soul abhors when you worship. He will begin to put pressure on you to stop by telling you "nothing is going to happen when you worship", "You are not worthy to worship", "You sin last week, so God is not going to listen to you right now", and other voices of doubt. What you need to understand is that praise will always get a push back. When Mary began to worship Jesus at his feet with an expensive ointment, Judas began to criticize her. No doubt Mary heard Judas. When you get a push back, you bush right back. Mary did not let Judas still you the opportunity to worship the King of glory. The same thing occur with Job. The question the book of Job was answering was the devil's question in Job 1:9, "Does not Job serve you for nothing?", in order words, Job worships you because of all the blessings you have given him. But though Satan was allowed to take everything that God had blessed Job with (Wealth, health, and family), he was there was one thing Satan could not steal from Job - Worship. *Press through the noise.* Bring in focus. The question you need to ask yourself is "Who is doing all this talking when I am trying to talk to God?" Stop listening to the enemy. When the devil used Peter to try break Jesus' focus to go to the cross, Jesus said, "Get thee behind me". The enemy will try to make you look at anything but the Lord. PUSH BACK

There is a difference between praise and worship. Praise thank God for the shoes, house, food or clothes. But worship says, "If I had no shoes, I have no house, if I have no food or clothes, I worship you for who you are and not because of what you can give me." Worship is casting down your crowns, that is, all your accomplishments and your victories at the feet of Jesus. The best way to worship is by reading the word of God and then exalting God through what you learn about Him. The way we get more praise is by getting in God's word, for there your esteem for God grows. You will struggle praising when you stop reading the Word. In the word we surrender. We often don't have much to say in praise and worship because our hearts is in something else.

Learn to "hallow" the name of the Lord. Jesus showed to that the way to the Father is to begin to ask God to hallow his name in our lives. This means that God wants his name to be special in your life. He wants his name to have a place of honor and reverence so you can develop a healthy fear of God.

## **2. Draw the presence of God**

An altar is a Gateway to heaven. It is an opening for God's presence to show up. In Genesis 12:8 and 13:4, we find that when Abraham built the altar that he called upon the name of the Lord. In Genesis 28:22, Jacob built a pillar as a "gate of heaven. The awesome thing about drawing the presence of God is that holy presence will begin to reveal the ungodly in our homes. An altar is a **SPIRITUAL GATEWAY BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL AND UNSPIRITUAL REALM**. At the prayer altar you are contending that you are separated unto God. In your life, home, church and even city, establish a place to draw the presence of God. It is easy to enter the presence of God when you have established the altar of God. **USHER IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD**. God's presence is your heart's home. In Psalms 84:1-4, David declared that the presence of God was his home, there at the altar of God. The reason why often are hearts are restless is because we "miss home". God's presence is your home and you will forever be restless until you "go home". Church father Augustine, his book Confessions, said it best when he said, "...You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You". The reason why we continue to feel restless is because we have been in false homes, such as relationships, careers, money making ventures. Your true home is God's presence.

When you begin to develop an appetite for God presence you will gain a greater appetite over the inferior appetite to the things of this world (ex. drug addiction). When you draw God's presence, even your appetites will change. It is not enough to just a moral will to do right, you need a greater desire. The altar is the place for his presence to draw near because he wants to reveal himself to you. The God that you serve is a revealing God. If you seek him with all of your heart, he will not only show up, but reveal his greatness, glory and grace. The problem we have today in many place is that the cry of sin has become louder than the cry of prayer.

## **3. Offer Sacrifices**

At the prayer altar we offer sacrifices. But what kind of sacrifice can we possible offer since we no longer offer animal sacrifices in the new covenant? We offer ourselves. (Romans 12:1-3). God is asking that you yield yourself t him. The altar is the place where you surrender completely to him. It is the place where you **LAY DOWN YOUR AGENDA**. God wants you to lay down your life for Him (Romans 12:1-2) and for his work (Romans 12:3-14). **ABSOLUTE SURRENDER** is the ultimate sign of love. When you surrender, and only when you surrender, will you be able to set apart your life for God.

In Romans 12:1-3, we are shown three conditions of a life given to God. The first thing we are told is to **be "presentable"**. This means we are to surrender voluntarily. God wants you voluntary present at his disposal. God is looking for servants who willing give of themselves

away. God does not just want something, he wants everything. God is not interested in just certain areas of your life, he paid for all of it (I Corinthians 6:20). Voluntary surrender is an expression of devotion. It is not about what I can get, but what I can offer. Notice how in Romans 12:2 worship is mentioned in a life given to God. Worship is giving our all to God. The result of a life given to God is transformation. The word used here in the original language of the passage means a change from the inside out. It is the same word used when Jesus showed his glory to three of his disciples (Matthew 17:2). The divine glory which was in the inside began to show in the outside of Jesus. Keep in mind that there is no transformation until we have consecration. God is looking for a REAL "YES". Only when you offer a real yes, wholly surrender, complete yielding, will you know his perfect will for your life. The reason why we so often can't find the will of God is because we are too busy asking God to do our will. This is what I want, while God is saying this is my vision for your life. God has a vision for your life, marriage, children, ministry, church and community. God is asking you to come to an end of yourself and make it all about him. The reason why Christianity seems not to be working for some people is because they have made the gospel as casual acceptance of Jesus rather than an absolute total surrender to Jesus. To accept Jesus for real means to accept the call to surrender completely to him. Is your life a blank check before the God of the universe? In Matthew 13:44 we are called to put everything on the line for Jesus. Why? Because Jesus is worth losing everything for! We give our lives because he is worth everything and that is why he is worthy. God is worthy of your trust, faith, hope, dreams and heart. The problem today is that we are wasting our lives doing a Christian spin of the "What's in it for me" dream. The call to discipleship Jesus requires superior love. Are you willing to Love Jesus ON HIS OWN TERMS? Are you willing to relinquish, abandon, to say good bye, renounce to anything that will get in the way of surrendering? This is your offering to God at the prayer altar every time you go before God.

In the Old Testament, the priests were to dedicate the meat offering with its fat. Fat signifies that which is extra. We often gain weight because we have too much fat. What's the spiritual fat you need to dedicate to the Lord at the prayer altar? When you go before the prayer altar, ask God to reveal the fat the offering he requires of you. He may ask for the fear of failure, shame, guilt, rejection, desired to be loved by everyone, or the jealousy.

Jesus did not give us options to consider, but commands to obey. The reason why God wants you to daily offer him your life is because it is much easier to follow Jesus when you are dead to your dreams, dead to your plans, dead to your ideas, and given to the life and purpose of Christ. God is calling you daily to abandon everything to and for Christ (Luke 9:57-62). radically abandon people cannot be stopped because they cannot be bought, and the devil has nothing in them by which he can pull strings to pull them away from God or his mission.

A life given to God as an offering is also "**acceptable**" (Romans 12:1-3). What are we after in offering our lives to God? What are we trying to accomplish? The answer is THE DELIGHT OF GOD. We want to see God take delight and pleasure in what Jesus is doing in and through us.

When you have a prayer altar which pleases God, you will see God demonstrate his delight in your home through peace and protection. When you have a prayer altar which pleases God, you will see God demonstrate his delight in your church through power and his presence. When God took delight in the offering King Solomon offered to the Lord, the delight of God came upon it and God demonstrated his glory so powerfully that the priest could not even enter the temple (I Kings 8:10-11).

Also, a life give to God as an offering is also *usable for God's purpose*. As you spend time in your prayer altars, offer your talents and gifts to Lord to advance the kingdom of God. Notice how Paul the apostle in Romans 12:4-13, he begins to urge the people of God to offer their gifts to service the body of God. Picture this, you were chosen to proclaim the glory of God to the ends of the earth, why then would you waste your gifts and talents on something which is temporal and has no eternal value? The biggest lie Satan has ever conceived is "ADVANCE YOURSELF". This is the same trap Adam and Eve felt into. As you go to the prayer altar on a daily basis, go before God not for the purpose to advance yourself, but offer yourself to **ADVANCE THE KINGDOM OF GOD NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.**