

BUILDING A 21 DAY PRAYER ALTAR

Introduction:

Rom 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Rom 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Here Paul is using sacrificial metaphors. Just as animals would be sacrificed on the altar, we should lay our lives down to serve God.

WEEK 1 – ESTABLISHING OUR PRAYER ALTARS

WEEK 2 – INTERCESSION FOR 2016

WEEK 3 – SCHOOL OF PRAYER

How to Build a Prayer Altar:

1. Find a Place

- Luk 6:12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.
- Exo 33:7 Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. Exo 33:8 And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. Exo 33:9 As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses.
- Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.
- Act 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.
- Act 10:9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.
- Mat 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room**, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

***"Closet" - The word has the same root as: τέμνω, to cut or divide, and means an apartment where supplies are divided and apportioned: a treasury, magazine, and therefore a secret and well-guarded place.

Monica. My 'devotional doily'. Decorate the place. Put up an inspirational verse or picture.

2. Set times for prayer

- Dan 6:10 Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.
- Act 10:9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.
- Act 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.

John Wesley would rise up at 4 AM every day to seek God for the first four hours of the day. In his later years Wesley was known to spend up to 8 hours in prayer. Wesley tried to never go to bed later than 10am in order to get up early. It took him several months before he could get up so early for his morning devotions. Join the church each evening as often as you can. Seems the apostles (Acts 3:1) thought it necessary to come together to pray, and so must we.

3. At your prayer altar, pray using physical biblical actions:

- Dan 6:10 Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.
- Deu 9:25 I lay prostrate before the LORD those forty days and forty nights because the LORD had said he would destroy you. Deu 9:26 I prayed to the LORD and said, "O Sovereign LORD, do not destroy your people, your own inheritance that you redeemed by your great power and brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.
- 1Ki 8:22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven 1Ki 8:23 and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below

Write it down. Be intentional. God will not move you to pray. You and I must discipline ourselves to pray. If God were to move us to pray, we would never leave the prayer closet.

4. Add Fasting & Abstaining:

To fast is to intentionally go without food for religious or other purposes.

- One meal a day, each day
- From sunrise to sunset
- Cut out certain foods like chocolate, coffee, cold drinks, sugar etc. but that's not a biblical fast. The closest we see is Daniel's food restrictions in Daniel 1: no meat or choice food, no wine. Only fruit, vegetables or water.
- Water only.
- Php 3:19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

You will not die.

Fasting should be accompanied by abstaining from certain activities. Fasting is giving up food in some way, abstaining is when we give up certain activities. We cannot 'fast' from TV. We only fast when we give up food in some way. Give up TV, Music, social media, socialising, social clubs, even gyming, etc. – with the intention to use the time we free up to spend with God. When we fast we also spend less time preparing food and eating and cleaning up afterwards. Then we can spend that time in prayer.

WHAT TO DO AT YOUR PRAYER ALTAR

1. NOAH – GENESIS 8:18-22 – THE PRIORITY OF WORSHIP IN MY LIFE

- Gen 8:18 So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. Gen 8:19 All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another. Gen 8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, **he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.**
- Not an house for himself and his family, but an altar for God; his first and greatest concern being for the glory of God, and not for the temporal good of himself and his: this altar was erected, and devoted to the service of God; it was built according to his will, and by his direction: Noah's view was to renew the worship of God” – John Gill's exposition of the Bible

Worship – the first duty of the servant of the Lord. The worship of God is my greatest priority. That's why Sunday worship is so important to me. Make worship a priority. At your prayer altar you can read

the psalms or other scriptures that praise God. You can play some praise & worship music where the lyrics focus on God, not us or what we're going through.

Noah sacrificed burnt offerings to God. One aspect of worship is expressed as we sacrifice something to God. Give your first month to God. "...sacrifice, in the act and design, is the essence of religion. Without sacrifice, actually offered or implied, there never was, there never can be, any religion" – Adam Clarke

"Who is worshiped at the altars of a territory sets the atmosphere. The battle in every territory is over worship. The battle is over what kind of altar will be established -- the altar of the Lord or altars to the enemy and his minions. This is true in the hearts of individuals, families, communities, people groups, and nations." – Kairos Transformation Ministries

2. ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12:7-8) – CALLING ON GOD IN PRAYER

- The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. Then he proceeded from there to the mountain 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 12:7-8)

Make requests

- Jer 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jer 29:12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

3. ABRAHAM (GENESIS 22:9-18) – SURRENDERING MY 'ISAAC', MY BEST TO GOD

- Gen 22:9 When they reached the place God had told him about, **Abraham built an altar** there and arranged the wood on it. **He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar**, on top of the wood.

4. JACOB (GENESIS 28:18-22) – COMMITMENT TO RELY ON GOD AND ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AS MY PROVIDER THROUGH THE TITHE / FINANCIAL OFFERINGS

- Gen 28:18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. Gen 28:19 He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. Gen 28:20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear Gen 28:21 so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God Gen 28:22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."****

Trust God to meet your needs. Take your material and financial needs to God in prayer. Note Jacob committed to tithe before he even had a job!

- Gen 30:43 In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.
- Gen 32:10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups.

5. JACOB (GENESIS 33:18-20) – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – "YOU WILL BE MY GOD"

- Gen 33:18 After Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan and camped within sight of the city. Gen 33:19 For a hundred pieces of silver, he bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, the plot of ground where he pitched his tent. Gen 33:20 There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel. ["El Elohe Israel" means

God, the God of Israel. I.e. God, the God of Jacob, since Jacob had been given the name "Israel"].

- Gen 32:28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

I will serve no other God.

6. JACOB – (GENESIS 35:1-7) – WHERE GOD WILL REVEAL HIMSELF

- Gen 35:1 Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau." Gen 35:7 There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. ***
- Isa 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

7. JOSHUA (EXODUS 17:13-16) – DECLARING THE LORD IS MY DEFENDER

- Exo 17:13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. Exo 17:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Exo 17:15 Moses built an altar and called it 'Jehovah Nissi' – 'The LORD is my Banner'. Exo 17:16 He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

– The banner in ancient warfare, even more than in modern, moved in front of the host, and determined the movements of the army. And so, by the stones that he piled and the name which he gave them, Moses taught Israel and us that they and we are under the command of God, and that it is the movements of His staff that are to be followed. It was God who determined the battle strategy and who gave Joshua and the army the victory while Moses interceded and Aaron and Hur accompanied him.

- Psa 35:1 Of David. Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me.
- Isa 49:25 But this is what the LORD says: "... I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.
- Isa 54:17 no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD.

8. THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING (EXODUS 29:36-37) – PLACE OF CONSECRATION – SET ASIDE FOR GOD'S PURPOSES

- Exo 29:36 Sacrifice a bull each day as a sin offering to make atonement. Purify the altar by making atonement for it, and anoint it to consecrate it. Exo 29:37 **For seven days at the altar make peace with the LORD and set the altar apart for its holy purpose.** Then the altar will be most holy. Anything that touches the altar will become holy.
- Anointing it symbolised setting it aside for holy purposes, consecrating it. The anointing made the altar holy, and also made the offerings that were placed on it holy. This is what Jesus did
- With his life in order to make us holy: Joh 17:19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition (Contemporary Version)

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,

Praised for you or criticized for you.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
you are mine, and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.

9. THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING (EXODUS 40:22-33) – CONFESSING & REPENTANCE IN ORDER TO LIVE A HOLY LIFE

- Exo 40:29 He set the altar of burnt offering near the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, and offered on it burnt offerings and grain offerings, as the LORD commanded him. Exo 40:30 He placed the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing, Exo 40:31 and Moses and Aaron and his sons used it to wash their hands and feet. Exo 40:32 They washed whenever they entered the Tent of Meeting or approached the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses.

“Some lifestyles do not allow our prayer lives to grow. ... God is about to visit us, but certain conditions need to be met. Prayer is not just saying words before God ... if we will stand before him, then we must change our lifestyles.

Sin brings about pollution, defilement and takes the glory of God away from a people. When such is the case, only dying to self and repentance can bring about a restoration of His glory and His presence. ... When God comes into a place all of our activities come under serious scrutiny”.

A sin-loaded heart cannot pray. A congregation full of sin cannot flow in the matter of prayer. So we need genuine repentance. But without humility there will be no repentance. God is asking us to become humble” - Pastor Victor Uchegbulam – “Increasing your Prayer Level

CONFESSION – admitting that we have sinned and that we are aware of our disobedience

REPENTANCE – to change our opinion concerning a behaviour. The steps we take to obey. Repentance can only be seen over a period of time as we put into practice changes in our lifestyles
Mat 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

Mat 3:8 Do something to show that you have really given up your sins. CEV

10. PLACE OF MEETING AND RECEIVING GOD’S BLESSING (EXODUS 20:24-25)

- Exo 20:24 "Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. **Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you.** Exo 20:25 If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it.

11. PLACE TO STUDY GOD’S WORD AND COME INTO AGREEMENT WITH IT TO RECEIVE BLESSINGS FOR ODIENCE AND ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE (JOSHUA 8:29-35)

- . Jos 8:30 Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, ... Jos 8:34 Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. Jos 8:35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the aliens who lived among them.
- Jos_21:45 Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

12. ELIJAH’S ALTAR (1 KINGS 18:30-39) – PLACE OF RECOMMITMENT AND TO ENCOUNTER GOD’S POWER

- 1Ki 18:30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. 1Ki 18:31 Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." 1Ki 18:32 ***With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD***, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. ... 1Ki 18:37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." 1Ki 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. 1Ki 18:39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"

13. DAVID'S ALTAR (2 SAMUEL 24:18-25) – INTERCESSION FOR PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL SIN

- 2Sa 24:18 On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 2Sa 24:19 So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. 2Sa 24:20 When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. 2Sa 24:21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" "To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped." 2Sa 24:22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. 2Sa 24:23 O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you." 2Sa 24:24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. 2Sa 24:25 David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.