



# Pray as David Did

## Prayer Customs

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It's often said that the key to a good marriage is good communication. In order to have a healthy marriage, husbands and wives must become experts in communication. Words are certainly the key component of communication, but there are other ways that we communicate with each other that if used effectively, can enhance what we are saying to our spouse and help to achieve the desired result. For instance, if your spouse is wanting to have a serious discussion about a problem that your 8 year old is having at school, it's better to do so on the porch swing where your only distraction might be the beauty of the flowers in the garden, than it would be to do so while watching the last three minutes of the Super Bowl.

It's sometimes the unsaid things that make the difference between hearing a person's heart instead of simply hearing his words.

Since we are a people betrothed to the Creator of the Universe, it's important that He hear not only our words, but our heart as well; and as it is in our physical marriages, the physical things we do as we attempt to communicate with Him might make a difference in what God hears.

In the first two parts of this study, we talked about how the Hebrew word for prayer - "palal" - carries with it the connotation of judgement, and thus showed how many of David's prayers were expressed as if he were making a case in court. We also saw that our posture during prayer oftentimes sheds light on the seriousness of our petition.

In this final installment, I want to discuss some of the various customs we see in the scriptures in regards to prayer. All religions have customs for prayer whether it be kneeling with the palms of our hands together while saying bedtime prayers as many Christians were taught as children, making the sign of the cross as many Catholics do, or wrapping leather around your arms as do many orthodox Jewish men. Though these cultures deem their customs to be important, it's interesting to note that we find no example in scripture of any of them. But there are prayer customs mentioned in scripture that were used by spiritual giants who got results when they prayed. They include:

- Raising Hands
- Praying at a certain time
- Praying facing a certain direction these vary
- These three customs are somewhat controversial, so as we discuss them, let's keep in mind that our purpose in prayer is convey our heart to our creator, not just our words.

### **Raised Hands**

Paul's first letter to Timothy reads like a textbook for how to serve the congregation of Israel. He instructs Timothy in how to determine who is qualified to lead, how to determine what to teach, and many other facets of the ministry. All this was important, but Paul also knew that Timothy's congregations were likely composed of both believing Jews as well as some from the northern tribes who were being called out of exile, and Paul's experiences had shown him that one of their greatest challenges would be to keep peace with the Jewish leadership. Thus he began that part of his letter saying -

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Timothy 2:8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

To keep peace with the community, Paul admonished the Hebrew community to pray, and to do so with uplifted hands.

Where did Paul come up with the idea of lifting up hands in prayer, and what's more, why did he include lifted hands in his admonition? I submit that this custom was based primarily on Moses' example in the book of Exodus -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Exodus 17:11** Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed.

I think this pretty much shows it. When God's people raise their hands, Israel prevails, and when they don't, the adversary prevails. To understand how this works, let's look at the Hebrew word behind the thought of raised, or *outstretched* hands.

In the Tnakh, there are two words that are primarily translated as "praise". They are "tehillah" (תְּהִלָּה - 8416) and "yadah" (יָדָה - 3034). Tehillah is a noun that appears 57 times in the Tnakh and in every case it is translated "praise" or some variant thereof. A good example is -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Psalm 22:3** But You *are* holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

On the other hand, "yadah" is a verb. It appears 114 times, of which 53 times it is translate "to praise", but the literal meaning of "yadah" is to "throw out the hands" or "to use the hand to throw". According to Strong's, it also means "to revere or worship (with extended hands)"<sup>1</sup>.

In additon to "praise", "yadah" is translated 37 times as "thanks" or "give thanks" and 18 times as "confess". All of these meanings - including "to throw out the hands" have something to do with prayer. So when we praise God, we (as we see in Psalm 22) create a habitation for Him - for He dwells in the praises of Israel. When Moses, in the Exodus story, extended his hand, by implication, he made a dwelling place for the God of Israel - YHVH Tzavaot - the Lord of Hosts - the commander of the army of Israel, and as Paul knew<sup>2</sup>, when you make a habitation for God in the congregation, you bring peace.

Though we see no place in the Tnakh where we're commanded to extend our hands when we pray, the first chapter of Isaiah seems to indicate that in God's mind, prayer and extended hands god "hand in hand" (pun intended). Isaiah began his prophecy laying charges against the people of Judah who have made a mockery of many of God's institutions of worship. These include the sacrifices, the observance of the Sabbath, the festivals, and even their prayers. In regards to prayer, he said -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Isaiah 1:15** When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

In this example of Hebrew parallelism<sup>3</sup> God is stating that when the Jewish people in Isaiah's day spread out their hands in prayer, it was offensive to Him because their hands were full of blood. This does not imply that He was opposed to them praying with extended hands, just as the previous passages did not imply that He was opposed to the Sabbath, the festivals, or prayer itself. The point is if you do those things while living an ungodly lifestyle, it is of no value.

In David's psalms he often speaks of raising his hands in praise or prayer. For example -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalm 63:3-4** <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. <sup>4</sup> So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

<sup>1</sup> The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, James Strong, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1990, "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary", pg. 47

<sup>2</sup> Philippians 4:6-7

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.gotquestions.org/synonymous-parallelism.html>

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalm 28:1** to you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. <sup>2</sup> Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Psalm 141:2** Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

In all three of these examples, David equates prayer with the lifting up of your hands.

There are a couple of examples in the Tnakh where prayer accompanied by extended hands was pleasing to God and got immediate results -

The first, and probably the most memorable example is that of Solomon's dedication of the Temple. I mentioned this in the previous installment "Posture for Prayer", but I now want to bring out the aspect of extended hands.

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Kings 8:22** 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 . . .

Solomon's prayer was that God's presence would dwell in the Temple and that He would hear the prayers of His people when they pray. At the end of his prayer, the text says -

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Kings 8:54** Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven.

And God immediately answered his prayer -

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Chronicles 7:1** As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

The next example is when Ezra was heart-broken when he found that some of the Jews and the priests who had returned to the land after the Babylonian captivity had married the pagan inhabitants of the land. In his utter frustration and shame, he wrote -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ezra 9:5-6** And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, <sup>6</sup> saying: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens . . .

In this example, Ezra is on his knees with his face down (because of his shame) and his hands extended. His prayer was quite extensive, but it got immediate results. The narrative states -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ezra 10:1** While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before<sup>4</sup> the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly.

While Ezra was praying, those who had entered into illegal marriages began to gather at the Temple with a plan to get right with God. Before the day was through, they had all made an oath to rectify the problem.

From these examples, we see that the leaders of Israel equated effective prayer with hands raised toward heaven. Along with that, there are examples that show there are specific times of the day when prayer seems to be more effective than at other times.

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<sup>4</sup> Literally "in the face of". He was praying facing the Temple.

## The Hour of Prayer

I touched on this briefly in Part 1 of this series, but I want to visit it again in a little more detail.

In one of his psalms, King David indicates that there is a time to pray when God can be found -

**Psalm 32:5-6** <sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah <sup>6</sup>  
Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

We understand that the "rush of great waters" speaks of a time of calamity, never-the-less, the psalm implies that there is, or will be a time when God cannot be found. Couple that thought with this next psalm that indicates that there is an acceptable time for prayer.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Psalm 69:13** But as for me, my prayer *is* to You, O LORD, *in* the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.

Notice how the translator inserted the definite article "the" in front of acceptable. Is this saying that there is a specific time for prayer? A time when God's mercy is at its greatest? To be fair, I must admit that I do not see the Hebrew direct article suffix "ha" ( the ) in the Hebrew text, but even if there is "an" acceptable time for prayer, then there is also times when prayer might not be as acceptable.

So what do we find as we search the scriptures in an attempt to determine if there is a better time for prayers than other times. First off, we find that David likens prayer to sacrifice. I mentioned this verse earlier in regards to lifting hands during prayer -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Psalm 141:2** Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

The evening - as well as the morning sacrifices took place every day at a specific time - approximately 9:00 each morning and 3:00 each afternoon. In regards to these sacrifices, God said -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Exodus 29:38-43** <sup>38</sup> " Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. <sup>39</sup> "One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. . . . <sup>42</sup> " *This shall be* a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. <sup>43</sup> "And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and *the tabernacle* shall be sanctified by My glory.

Twice each day at the altar of burn offering, God said He would meet with the children of Israel. When you think about it, it's like God takes time off from His schedule to show up at the altar at these times each day, and since it's a "meeting", we can assume He's expecting us to be there as well. If that's the case, do we see any evidence of God meeting His people at a specific time? Yes we do.

**Genesis 3:8** <sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

This, of course, is when Adam and Eve met with God after eating the forbidden fruit. In the narrative, God is quite explicit as to when He met with them, but we don't see it without knowing about the weather patterns of the land of Israel<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> It is assumed by many that the Garden of Eden was in Israel.

First we must see that the word “cool” is translated from the Hebrew word “ruwach” (רוּחַ - 7307) which means wind, breath, mind, and spirit. Thus there’s no direct reference to the temperature, but instead, a reference to the wind. If indeed the Garden was in Israel, especially within 30-40 miles of the coast (assuming the geography was the same then as today), then there would be a certain weather pattern associated with that locale called a “sea breeze”. We all learned about sea breezes and land breezes in grammar school. A sea breeze is cool air that is drawn from the sea because of the heating of the land by the sun. As the ground heats us, the air above it begins to rise causing a wind that comes from the sea. The cool wind begins in the morning and continues till late afternoon. If you live on the eastern part of the Florida peninsula, you know what I mean since in the summer, it rains practically every afternoon as the moist rising air that is drawn from the sea builds into afternoon thunderstorms.

Therefore, it’s quite likely that God was telling us that He met with Adam and Eve in the morning when the wind began to blow, quite possibly at about 9:00 AM.

We also have the example of the three messengers who met with Abraham and Sarah to announce the eminent birth of their son - Isaac.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Genesis 18:1-2** And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him.

Here again, God is specific about the time of day He came to deliver the good news to Abraham, it was the hot part of the day, which in most places is about 3:00 in the afternoon.

So we see examples that God chose to meet with certain people at a specific time. Are there examples of other events that happened at those times? Yes indeed. For example, Isaac (who is a type of the Messiah) met his wife Rebecca (who is a type of the bride) in the afternoon.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Genesis 24:63** And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming. <sup>64</sup> And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel

Notice the phrase “toward evening”. The Hebrew literally means “turning toward evening”, in other words “the afternoon”. Notice what Isaac had gone out to do at time of the day. My translation says that he went out to meditate, but the Hebrew word could also mean “commune” as in “communing with God”, i.e. - pray.

Then there’s the example in 2 Kings where the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom were determined to make war with Moab, but before they did, they went to Elisha for assurance that they would succeed. Elisha would not give them that assurance, but instead indicated that a prophecy would come through a musician, which it did. Though the land was suffering under a drought, the musician instructed the three kings to dig water canals because God was going to fill them with water, even though there would be no rain. This was to be a sign that they would succeed in their endeavor.

And so it was -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **2 Kings 3:20** Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

This great miracle happened at the time of the morning sacrifice.

Though we seen God meeting with people at the time of the sacrifices, are there specific instances where we find prayer offered at those times? Yes - numerous examples. One that quickly comes to mind is the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Breaking into the story, the prophets of Baal had been going through their motions all morning long with no success. Then it became afternoon -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **1 Kings 18:29** And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

So Elijah built an altar and had it drenched with water, and as the story goes -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **1 Kings 18:36-38** And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word.<sup>37</sup> "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again."<sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

Then to repeat a story mentioned earlier, Ezra received an immediate answer to his prayer that was offered at the time of the evening sacrifice.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ezra 9:5-6** And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God,<sup>6</sup> saying: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens . . .

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ezra 10:1** While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before<sup>6</sup> the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly.

So did Daniel when he prayed for understanding of the events of his day -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Daniel 9:1-3** In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans-<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.<sup>3</sup> Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Daniel 9:20-23**<sup>20</sup> While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God,<sup>21</sup> while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.<sup>22</sup> He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

So we've seen a number of examples of answers to prayers that were offered at the times of the daily sacrifices, but this is "Old Testament", what about New Testament examples. Are there any? Again, the answer is "yes".

The story of the birth of John the Baptist begins at the time of either the morning or evening sacrifice -

**Luke 1:5-11**<sup>5</sup> In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.<sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.<sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.<sup>8</sup> Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on

<sup>6</sup> Literally "in the face of". He was praying facing the Temple.

duty, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

According to Exodus 30, the burning of incense took place at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices. Thus we have a New Testament example of a miracle coinciding with these appointed times. In fact, it's clear that events like these continued to happen at "the hour of prayer" even long after Yeshua was put to death. Take Pentecost for example:

<sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 2:1-4** When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This event took place at the time of the morning sacrifice as is clearly established by Peter -

**Acts 2:12-15** <sup>12</sup> And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" <sup>13</sup> But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." <sup>14</sup> But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. <sup>15</sup> For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

The "third hour of the day" is 9:00 AM, the time of the morning sacrifice.

Then there's the example of Peter and John making it a point to be at the Temple during the "hour of prayer"

<sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 3:1** Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

This, of course, is when they healed the lame man.

The example of Cornelius is quite interesting in that he is the first recorded non-Jew to be called after the death of Yeshua, yet he appears to be praying at the time of the evening sacrifice just as was the Jewish custom. In explaining to Peter what had happened, he said -

**Acts 10:30-31** <sup>30</sup> . . . "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 <sup>31</sup> and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.

It appears that the prayers of Cornelius as well as many before him may have pricked the ears of God because they were offered at the appointed times that God set in place.

Before wrapping up this series, I want to discuss one other facet of prayer that might enhance the effectiveness of our prayers, and that is to take into consideration where we point our face when we offer our prayers. This might seem like a trivial point to many, but it's a point that can also fuel a heated argument.

### Praying Toward the Jerusalem

Psalm 5 is a song about prayer. It begins by asking God to turn His ear to David's prayer, to consider David's meditation, and to hearken to the cries of His servant. Then after contrasting his petitions to those of the wicked, David said -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalm 5:7** But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.

Praying toward the Temple appears to be important to the wise men of old<sup>7</sup>. Even though the Temple was not even built in David's day, he saw himself entering its courtyard and bowing in prayer before the King.

Bowing is a sign of respect and honor. Even today we may bow toward a king or dignitary, expressing in that action our respect for that person. We would never even considering bowing with our face turned away from the one we claim to highly respect. To bring it closer to home - do we not instruct our children to face the people (especially adults) they are talking to?

Praying with our face toward the Temple or toward Jerusalem is not popular today in most Christian or even Hebrew Roots circles. I submit that much of that indifference is due to a misunderstanding of this verse -

**Ezekiel 8:16-17** <sup>16</sup> And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD. And behold, at the entrance of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, worshipping the sun toward the east. <sup>17</sup> Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too light a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations that they commit here, that they should fill the land with violence and provoke me still further to anger?"

When people read this, they see men facing east and praying to a sun god, which they correctly understand is an abomination in the eyes of God. Unfortunately, they miss the fact that they were standing between the porch and the alter, and thus while facing east, these men had their backs to the temple and in effect, had their backs to God - an act of total disrespect. The point God was trying to make is that 1) they had their faces toward the sun and were worshipping it, and 2) they did not have their face toward YHVH and were not worshipping Him. They were honoring the sun god while standing at the Temple of YHVH.

One cannot discuss this topic without bringing in the example of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. This event took place on the east side of the Temple near the Altar of Burnt Offering<sup>8</sup> where Solomon had built a platform<sup>9</sup> so that the assembled Israelites could see. He then knelt down on his knees with his back to the audience and faced the Temple<sup>10</sup> as he began to offer his prayer.

Solomon's prayer was one of repentance. He speaks of all the occasions by which Israel might sin, then asks God to hear their prayer if they come to the Temple or pray towards it.

Undoubtably, the part of the prayer that deals with the exiles is the part that should interest us the most. In it Solomon said -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **2 Chronicles 6:36-39** <sup>36</sup> "When they (*your people*) sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; <sup>37</sup> "yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have

### Thinking or Facing

There is a question as to whether Solomon's prayer indicates that a person would physically look toward the Temple, or simply have his mind focused on the Temple. To answer this question, we should first look at the other examples offered by this author, specifically Psalm 5:7 . . . [Read More>>](#)

<sup>7</sup> See also Jonah 2:4; Psalm 28:1;138:2

<sup>8</sup> 1 Kings 8:22

<sup>9</sup> 2 Chron. 6:13

<sup>10</sup> 2 Chron. 6:20 - "el-ha maqom" - literally "toward this place".



done wrong, and have committed wickedness'; <sup>38</sup> "and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name: <sup>39</sup> "then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You.

It's obvious that Daniel remembered this prayer. He found himself a captive in a foreign land just as Solomon had predicted. When faced with being thrown into a den of lions if he prayed to the God of Israel, Daniel, as was his custom, faced Jerusalem and prayed.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Daniel 6:10** <sup>10</sup> When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

To Daniel, Jerusalem was the city of God, even though at that time in history, the Temple lay in ruins. Yet because Jerusalem is the city where God has placed His name, Daniel paid respect to God by facing the location of God's house. We should also remember that in facing Jerusalem from Babylon, Daniel was facing southwest.

Like Daniel, the "exiles" portion of Solomon's prayer applies to us. Our forefathers were taken captive to a foreign land and eventually scattered throughout the world. We are the ones who have finally "come to ourselves" and we are the ones who are making supplication to God while exiled in a foreign land. We - no matter where on the globe we currently reside, are the ones who in Solomon's prayer would be facing North, South, East, or West - praying toward the land, toward Jerusalem, and toward God's Holy Temple.

### Conclusion

So here we have three suggestions for prayer:

- Pray with raised hands
- Pray during the times of the daily sacrifices
- Pray toward Jerusalem

Though the scripture in no way makes these three a commandment or a prerequisite for effective prayer, we can see that the Biblical heroes of old used these and got results. These unspoken gestures were a way of communicating their heart to the God of Israel, just as we sometimes do things that are not spoken so that our spouse can hear and understand the heart of the things we speak.

I hope that we would seriously consider the things I've offered in these three studies. I believe that the suggestions that have been offered can enhance our prayers and make them more effective as we approach the perilous times ahead.

Shalom Alecheim

## Addendum

There is a question as to whether Solomon's prayer indicates that a person would physically look toward the Temple, or simply have his mind focused on the Temple. To answer this question, we should first look at the other examples offered by this author, specifically Psalm 5:7.

At the beginning of the psalm, David asks God to hear his prayers since every morning he directs his voice to Him. David then contrasts himself with the evildoers, proud ones, and liars who might also pray to God by saying -

<sup>KJV</sup> **Psalm 5:7** But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: *and* in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

This verse is an example a Hebrew parallelism, a poetic device where you state a thought, then state it again another way. David is saying that he approaches God's house (the dwelling place of God's glory) fully cognoscente of the fact that it's only by God's mercy that he has been allowed him to come. He then follows it by saying that he worships God in respect and reverence by bowing toward the "Temple".

The term that he uses to imply worship is "shachah" which means to bow down or prostrate oneself. Though it's understood that David's worship is "toward" God, he shows it by bowing down "toward" the Temple, the place of his throne.

The English word "toward" is translated from the Hebrew preposition "el" (אֶל - 413) which means "to" or "toward". "el" is connected to the noun "heykel" (palace, temple) by a "makkeph" - a Hebrew "hyphen", and thus becomes part of the associated noun. Thus we have "to the Temple" or "toward the Temple". According to Gesenius<sup>11</sup>, "el" is "a noun indicative of motion, direction to any place". An example of its use is found in Isaiah 38 -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Isaiah 38:2** Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall (אֶל-הַקִּיר - "el-hakir"), and prayed to the LORD,

In regards to motion and direction, BDB<sup>12</sup> adds the note "whether physical or mental" to its general definition of "el". In other words, "el" indicates motion or direction whether it's physical motion or mental motion. Thus, considering the fact that the Temple had yet to be built, was David only bowing in his mind? Maybe so. Maybe he was "bowing" toward the yet-to-be-built Temple that he had envisioned. After all, he knew the exact location where the Temple was to be built, he had procured the materials to build it, and he had been promised that it would be built. Thus, in his mind the Temple was as good as built. He could, therefore, bow toward it - or at least toward where it soon would be. Whether built or not built, physically or mentally, out of respect for its future occupant, David was still bowing toward the Temple.

But Solomon is more precise in his wording. As he is praying toward the Temple with his hands spread out toward heaven, he asked God to hearken to the prayer he was making toward the temple -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **1 Kings 8:28-29** "Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: <sup>29</sup> "that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said,

<sup>11</sup> Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, H.W.F. Gesenius, Baker Books, 1979, pg.46a

<sup>12</sup> Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, 1906, reprinted 2012, pg.39a

'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place.

In this verse the phrase “toward this place” is “el-haMakom” (אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם), and again, the preposition “el” is translated as “toward” which would stand to reason since Solomon was at that time physically facing the Temple. Then in the very next verse, he used the exact same phrase - “el-haMakom” when he spoke of the people of Israel who would also pray toward the same place -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **1 Kings 8:30** "And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.

Solomon uses the same preposition “el” combined with the noun “place” again in 1 Kings 8:35 as well as in verse 42 except that he says “house” instead of “place”. But in verse 44, he becomes even more precise.

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Kings 8:44** "If your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to the LORD toward the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name,

In this verse, the preposition “toward” is not derived from the Hebrew preposition “el”. Instead, Solomon used the noun “derek” (דֶּרֶךְ - 1870) which is translated “way” and generally refers to a road or a path.

“Derek” comes from the verbal root word “darak” (דָּרַךְ - 1869) which means “to tread, trample, or march”. Thus a “derek” is a path or road on which one walks or marches, thus motion is implied. In addition, roads always go in a certain direction. Thus when you are on a road (*derek*), you are going in the direction of the road.

The first time we see the word “derek” in scripture is in the phrase “to guard the way (*derek*) to the tree of life” (Gen.3:24) where a physical turning sword is in a physical garden guarding a physical road that lead to a physical tree that bore physical fruit.

To better understand the word “derek”, consider the story of Rahab who misled the men of Jericho as to the whereabouts of the two spies. She led them to believe that they had returned to the camp of Israel which was by the Jordan River. You would therefore think that the men of Jericho would pursue them in the direction of the Jordan, and that is just what they did. The KJV says -

<sup>KJV</sup> **Joshua 2:7** And the men pursued after them the way (*derek*) to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

But the JPS Tnakh<sup>13</sup> is much clearer. It says -

<sup>TNK</sup> **Joshua 2:7** So the men pursued them in the direction (*derek*) of the Jordan down to the fords; and no sooner had the pursuers gone out than the gate was shut behind them.

So we see that “the way” implies going in a certain direction. Going back to 1 Kings 8:44, Solomon states that there would be times when God would send soldiers out to battle. These soldiers would have marched down a road or path in a certain direction to reach the enemy. When they gained victory over the enemy, Solomon said that they would pray to YHVH “in the path” or “in the direction” of Jerusalem and the Temple.

<sup>13</sup> Jewish Publication Society (1985); from BibleWorks 6

The final portion of Solomon's prayer was for the exiles who would be taken captive because of their failure to follow God. Solomon hoped that while in exile, they would figure out what they had done to themselves and would want to return to God. So he said -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **1 Kings 8:48** "and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward (*derek* - in the direction of) their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name . . ."

It's clear that Solomon was indicating that the people would physically turn their face toward Jerusalem and pray toward the Temple. We know that to be true because some 500 years later, Daniel - a spiritual giant who was himself an exile from the Promised Land - made it his custom to open his windows toward Jerusalem and pray.