

December 2023

Praise and Worship Unto God!

Throughout the month of November, we focused our prayers on *Thanksgiving, Gratitude and Appreciation*, for all of the gracious and marvelous things that our Heavenly Father has done on our behalf. This month, we have the pleasure of continuing to thank God, particularly for the birth of Jesus Christ, as we give our attention to true Praise and Worship. Praise is the joyful recounting of all God has done for us, and for who He is and has been towards us. Praise is closely intertwined with thanksgiving, voicing our gratitude and appreciation of our Heavenly Father, all of which was a part of our November prayer focus.

Praise paves the way for God's power to be displayed. Satan has to bow and back-off when we praise God. Our lives are affected and changed when we praise Him.

No matter what things look like, we will **praise** God, for He is working all things out for our good and His glory. No matter what trials come our way, we will **praise** Him in advance, for He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a difference between praise and worship; we owe God both. Praise is **about** God; worship is **to** God. Praise is opening up; worship is entering in. Praise is boldly declaring that He is worthy and that He is Omnipresent. Worship is humbly bowing in the presence of a Holy God. *Praise applauds what God has done, worship is honoring God for who He is.*¹

The intention of praise and worship is to create a connection between us and our Creator, our Lord, our Heavenly Father. We were created to live in God's presence. Life anywhere else is distorted and dissatisfying.

God gave Moses the plan to allow Himself to dwell in the presence of His people through the building of the ark of God and the tabernacle of God.

Through the rituals and sacrifices prescribed by God, the high priest was able to come into the presence of the Almighty and represent the people.

*However, through King David, God shows us He desires more than just the blood and sacrifice of selected animals; He desires a pure and contrite heart. Jesus, in His dialogue with the Samaritan woman, tells us that God is looking for worshipers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.*²

When Jesus died he rent, tore down the heavy piece of cloth called the veil which divided the holy place from the second room, the Holy of Holies, which contained the Ark of the Covenant. No one could touch it and live. It embodied the presence of God and radiated a fiery Glory called Shekinah. This was where the high priest sprinkled the sacrificial blood once a year on the Day of Atonement as he prayed for God to forgive the sins of his people. Christ's blood was spilled to atone for our sins forever. There is no longer a separation between the Holies of Holies and God's people. We can enter freely into worship, if we desire to do so.

In Revelation 7:11 (NIV) we see, "All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God."

Praise and worship destroy the plans of the enemy. The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?" The LORD replied, "Judah shall go first." Praise (Judah) went up first to praise the Lord in the beauty of holiness and the children of Israel were victorious.

Remember how we began this year? Our prayer focus was centered on ***What does God Require of Me in 2023?*** February focused on Consecration. Our hearts and minds were on one accord with God and His expectations of us. As it was in the beginning, God's requirement of us has not changed. His requirement of us then and now, and even throughout the Bible, was that His children would praise and worship Him. Something we should do all year long, but what better time than now, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus?

Psalm 29:1-2 - Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, Give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Fellow Intercessors, please feel free to use the below Suggested Prayer Points during your times of group and private prayer. Space has been allowed for you to share any prayer points that the Holy Spirit may have laid on your heart. This will facilitate our praying for one another, praying over shared concerns and our praying in unity.

^{1.} *ShareFaith Magazine*

^{2.} *The Purpose and Power of Praise and Worship, by Dr. Myles Munroe*

Suggested Prayer Points

These are just suggestions. As you spend time with God and inquire of Him how to address your prayers this month, feel free to direct your points as the Holy Spirit leads, and to use scriptures of your choosing.

Prayer Point: In everything we do, we should, at all times, remember to do it for the glory of God and to give Him thanks. His mercy is new every morning, grace abounds and abounds and His love, everlasting.

Pray that we always take a step back, to not *only* recognize the many blessings that God bestows upon us, but also praise Him for just who He is!

He is supreme

He is Omnipresent and Omnipotent

He Omnipresent

He is just

He is kind

He is magnificent

He is God and Lord over ALL

Scriptures:

Nehemiah 9:5b - "Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise." Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Prayer Point:

May we surrender our whole selves, body, mind and spirit as we focus on God and to receive His directions. For He is our God.

Scriptures: Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Prayer Point: Pray that we will not trust in our jobs or to our possessions to primarily meet our needs. May we not look at or buy into the persuasion of man, but to God and God alone.

Scriptures: Exodus 20: 2-6

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

1 Chronicles 16:29 - Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: Bring an offering, and come before him: Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Prayer Point: May we remember that there is no way that we can walk in God's peace, power, and perfect plan without a lifestyle of worship.

Scriptures:

Psalm 95:6-7 - O come, let us worship and bow down: Let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God; And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Prayer Point: Pray that we put shame behind us and come boldly to God's throne in worship, and receive His plans and strategies for our lives here on earth.

Scriptures:

Romans 10:11 - "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame. '"

Prayer Point: God's goodness surpasses our many requests and our imagination. In so many varied ways we see His presence, His hand of unmerited mercy and favor, and His loving grace.

Let's pray that ...just as the Lord expresses his loving kindness in varied ways....let us be free to express our Praise to Him in the numerous manner that communicates our reaching out, our giving a sacrifice of praise, may we demonstrate our praise with the strength of our voice, or some of the other examples that our Hebrew Sister and Brother did:

- **Towdah:** "Sacrifice;" expressed in Mosaic Law offerings, Jesus' example of being a "living sacrifice" to God (Exodus 27:6-7, Romans 12:1)
- **Yadah:** "Lifting of hands;" reaching out to God, declaring our dependence on Him and proclaiming our love for our Father. (Exodus 17:11, 1 Timothy 2:8) ...
- **Barak/Barouch:** "Bowling;" giving reverence to God in recognition of His holiness and sovereignty over everything that lives. "Lifting of hands;" reaching out to God, declaring our dependence on Him and proclaiming our love for our Father.(Exodus 34:8, Psalm 5:7) ...
- **Shabach:** "Shout;" to lift up your voice and praise God with all of one's might (Psalm 47:1, Isaiah 12:6)
- **Zamah:** "Sing/play instruments;" playing music to express joy in God's presence. (Psalm 150:3-5, Ephesians 5:19) ...
- **Halal:** "Celebrate/boast/rave;" root word for "hallelujah," to express praise for God through physical motion. (2 Samuel 6:14, Psalm 149:3) ...
- **Tehillah:** "Sing/dance/praise;" to use many ways to praise God (all of the above!) (Psalm 22:25, Isaiah 61:1-3)

Scriptures:

Psalm 150 - Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the

sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

Our negative emotions, especially anger, resentment, hatred, shame and anxieties arise from abuse, betrayal, hurt, and from our continued disobedience – in a word ‘devaluing’ – that we all experience in this fallen and evil world. This negativity weaves thread by thread a veil between us and God, making true worship difficult. Scripture tells us to get rid of anger, to ‘fear not’, to confess our sins, to stay away from the occult, and to cast all our anxiety on Him.

Prayer Point: Pray that we remove from our heart any veil that prevents us from clearly seeing, hearing and entering or truly worshipping our Heavenly Father.

Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 3: 14 – 16 NIV

“But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NIV

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Ephesians 1: 18, 19 NIV *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for us who believe”*

Prayer Point: Pray that we are able to worship and praise Him, even in the middle of the severe storm clouds that threaten us.

Scriptures:

Psalm 62:6 - *Truly he is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken.*

Prayer Point: Holy Spirit, bring to our remembrance to maintain a pure heart so that we can worship at any time, and wherever we are.

Scriptures:

John 4:23 *tells us that the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*

Prayer Point: Pray that we long to have a deeper and stronger relationship with our loving Heavenly Father. We pray that God’s Word becomes deeply rooted in our hearts and influences our thoughts and actions.

Scriptures:

Mark 12:30 - *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

Prayer Point: Pray that we become more conscious about our ways pleasing God. May we be cognizant and intentional to bring joy to Him by the way we live.

Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:30 - *And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.*

Prayer Point: God you have done great and mighty things and wonderful work on our behalf. Help us to not be hesitant to rejoice, share, or to tell of your marvelous works.

Scriptures:

Psalms 9:1-10 NKJV

I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. When my enemies turn back, They shall fall and perish at Your presence. For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness. You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever. O enemy, destructions are finished forever! And you have destroyed cities; Even their memory has perished. But the LORD shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment. He shall judge the world in righteousness, And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness. The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble. And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

Prayer Point: We do not have to wait to see the outcome of our prayers to praise and worship God. For if we believe, we know He is not like a man who will lie, but His word is true and will come to fruition.

Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 5:7 - *We walk by faith, not by sight.*

Hebrews 11:1 - *Now faith is the assurance of what we hope for and the certainty of what we do not see.*

Prayer Point: In due time, What God has promised will come to pass. Let's not get tired of waiting, let's not get weary of doing well. Let's stay encouraged by praising the Lord!

Scriptures:

Psalms 27:14 - *"Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"*

Isaiah 40:31 - *"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (ESV)*

Prayer Point: Praise the Lord for when we walk with Him, He provides wisdom, discernment and understanding.

Scriptures:

Daniel 2:20 - *"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.*

Prayer Point: Set aside all that God has given, prepared, and provided for us, He deserves our praise for who He is apart from what He's done for us.

Scriptures:

Psalm 69:30 - *"I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving."*

Psalm 99:1-5 - *The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. Great is the LORD in Zion; He is exalted over all the nations. Let them praise your great and awesome name—He is holy. The King is mighty, he loves justice - You have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right. Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His footstool; He is holy.*

Prayer Point: Praise God for His love for us.

Scriptures:

Psalm 118:1:

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Prayer Point:

May worship become a condition and a pattern of our being.

Scriptures:

Romans 12:1–2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Prayer Point:

Pray that we will not take on or be lulled into worshiping any other idol, routine, item, or person. May we remember that there is great punishment if we do this.

Scriptures:

Exodus 20:1–6

And God spoke all these words, saying,

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

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