

Bible Readings

1 Kings 8:22-53

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven ²³ and said:

“LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. ²⁴ You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

²⁵ “Now LORD, the God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful in all they do to walk before me faithfully as you have done.’ ²⁶ And now, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

²⁷ “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ²⁸ Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. ²⁹ May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall be there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. ³⁰ Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

³¹ “When anyone wrongs their neighbor and is required to take an oath and they come and swear the oath before your altar in this temple, ³² then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing down on their heads what they have done, and vindicating the innocent by treating them in accordance with their innocence.

³³ “When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple, ³⁴ then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their ancestors.

³⁵ “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, ³⁶ then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

³⁷ “When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, ³⁸ and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of the afflictions of their own hearts, and spreading out their hands toward this temple— ³⁹ then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know every human heart), ⁴⁰ so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our ancestors.

⁴¹ “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— ⁴² for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, ⁴³ then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

⁴⁴ “When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, ⁴⁵ then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.

⁴⁶ “When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to their enemies, who take them captive to their own lands, far away or near; ⁴⁷ and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; ⁴⁸ and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; ⁴⁹ then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. ⁵⁰ And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their captors to show them mercy; ⁵¹ for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace.

⁵² “May your eyes be open to your servant’s plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. ⁵³ For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, Sovereign LORD, brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”

Luke 19:45-48

Jesus at the Temple

⁴⁵ When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. ⁴⁶ “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. ⁴⁸ Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

Sermon: Solomon's Prayer for the Temple

G'Day Church Family

We're **continuing** our **series** on the OT book of **1 Kings**.

It would be great to have your **bible opened at 1 Kings 8** – starting at verse 22. You may have received a sermon **outline** - if you'd like to **take notes**.

Let me **ask God** to grant us **understanding** this morning

Let's pray...

Context

- The context is...
- **Solomon** has **built a House for the Lord's Name** – a Temple
- The Temple has been **furnished**
- The **most important item** in the Temple is the **Ark of the Covenant**
- And last week we saw the **glory and presence of God** enter the **Temple**
- Now the **Temple** is operational
- The **Temple** is the **focal point** for the **worship of the Lord** – it's where the **people bring** their **offerings, sacrifices** and **prayers to God**

Intro (Prayer)

- So, we **pick up** the **story** in **verse 22** of chapter 8
- **Solomon** stood before the altar of the LORD - in front of the whole assembly of Israel - spread out his hands toward heaven
- And he **begins to pray**
- **Prayer** is **communicating with God**

[PowerPoint 1-Wifi]



- Most of us have Wi-Fi at home – **Wi-Fi is an invisible connection - Wi-Fi connects our computer - with other computers** – and so we **can talk to each other** – like we do with church online – and we can transfer information to each other
- **God has a Wi-Fi** – it's **invisible too** – only God's Wi-Fi - doesn't ever go down and lose its connection – God's Wi-Fi allows us to connect to Him - and talk to Him 24/7

As Solomon prays in this passage of Scripture – **we can learn a lot about prayer**

#1 – Prayer should Begin with God

[PowerPoint 2-#1 Begin with God]

- **Solomon begins His prayer by praising God - for who He is (vv23-30)**
- Solomon acknowledges some very important truths about God in v23-24
- Solomon says – there is **no God like Him in Heaven above or on the Earth below**
- As we said last week - **God is Holy – unique – one of a kind – infinite and perfect**
- Solomon also acknowledges that **God will always keep His covenant agreement of love with His people** – if they remain obedient to Him
- And Solomon acknowledges that - **God always keeps His promises** – as He has done by Solomon completing the building of the Temple – just as God had promised King David, Solomon's father
- Application

- We can learn from Solomon here – that this is a **great way to begin our prayers** – we should begin by **praising God** - for who He is - for His awesomeness - and for His faithfulness - and for His consistency (He is the same yesterday, today and forever)
- Our prayers **should begin** with God – not with ourselves
- Having acknowledged that God keeps His promises – Solomon asks God in vv25-26 – to **continue to keep His promises** - and in particular keep the promise He made to King David, that there would always be a successor to sit on the throne of Israel, if David's descendants remain faithful to God
- For us - when we pray – **we need to claim God's promises.**
- Through believing prayer – we can claim God's promises. For example – **we could pray** – *Lord you promise to give us wisdom if we ask, please grant me wisdom as I face this difficult decision...*
- **Solomon also acknowledges God's omnipresence** (a posh way of saying **God is everywhere**) – verses 27-30
- **Solomon acknowledges** that if Heaven can't contain God – then this earthly Temple can't either.

There's the story of young Johnny asking his Sunday School teacher - "where is God?"

The Sunday School teacher says "You know the answer, Johnny, God is everywhere!"

Johnny says "Is He in this Lego box?"

The Sunday School teacher says "Yes, Johnny, God is everywhere!"

So, Johnny slams the lid on the Lego box and says "I've got Him!"

- **The Temple** is not a **Lego Box** – it can't fully capture God's presence
- The **Temple** is just a **focal point** so that the **people** can focus their attention on God
- As humans we **need something physical and tangible** to focus our attention when worshipping God

- We have a **church building** – and in one sense God is there – but remember He is everywhere – that's Solomon's point
- So, **Solomon prays** that **God will hear the prayers of the people** not just when they're in the vicinity of the Temple - but also - when they pray towards the place of the Temple
- And Solomon finishes in v30 by acknowledging that **God's true dwelling place is Heaven** – and that God can hear prayers from Heaven
- So, the **1st point** is – **prayer should begin with God**

Then from verses 31 to 51 – **Solomon continues his prayer** - with 7 petitions or prayer requests - if you like

#2 – Prayer should be regular

- It's no coincidence that there are **Seven** petitions
- **Seven** is **God's number** – [linked to the 7 days of creation]
- **Seven** is the **number of: completeness, fulfilment and perfection**
- The **Temple** took **seven years to build** - and was **completed in the seventh month** during the festival of the tabernacles - **which lasted seven days**
- These **seven petitions** or prayer requests - represent a complete set of possible scenarios - that the people might pray - as individuals - or as a nation

[PowerPoint 3-#2 Regular]

- The **2nd point** then is – these 7 petitions remind us to pray each day (7 days per week)
- **Our prayers should be regular** (daily) and we should commit to a consistent prayer life
- Application
- How's our prayer life going? Is it regular? Or only when we want something? Or is it non-existent?

- If you have a close friend – you **only remain close** by communicating with them – if you don't talk to your friend – then it's not much of a friendship – **more like an acquaintance?**
- **God is meant to be our number one priority** – it stands to reason - we need to be praying regularly – and keeping in contact with Him

#3– Prayer can be about anything and everything

- In Solomons seven prayer petitions he **covers a number of scenarios**:
 - **Disputes between neighbours** and the need for God to judge
 - And the **army** of Israel being **defeated by their enemies** because of their disobedience to God and the need for the people to turn back to God
 - Solomons prayers deal with - **Drought** in the land because of disobedience
 - **Famines, plagues, blight, mildew, locusts, grasshoppers** – and **enemies attacking** the cities – and **disasters and diseases** – and the need for God to hear their pleas for help
 - Solomons also prays for God to listen to the prayers of foreigners who have heard of God's great name
 - **God listening to the prayers of the army** when He has sent them into battle
 - **Even God listening to the prayers of the people of Israel** – who have been **captured and taken into exile into a foreign land** – like Babylon– the people can still pray towards the temple in Jerusalem - and God will hear their prayers – just like Daniel did when he was in exile (See Daniel 6:10)

[PowerPoint 4-#3 Anything]

- **3rd point** is – **we can pray about anything and everything** – no scenario is too small - or too big - for God – **God cares about every detail** of our lives
- Maybe there's something troubling you this morning – **take it to the Lord in prayer...**

#4 – Prayer can be anywhere and everywhere

- In Solomons seven prayer petitions we see that **prayer is not restricted to the Temple area**
- People can pray when they are in **battle** in a **foreign land** – and they can pray even when they are in **exile** and **held captive**

[PowerPoint 5-#4 Anywhere]

- 4th point – **we can pray anywhere and everywhere – in church – at home – at school/Uni – at work - in the garden – at the beach – in the car [but don't close your eyes if you're driving]– on the train – in the shower [as Jenny mentioned – but don't make it a soap opera!] – we can even pray in our beds [but try not to fall asleep] – God's Wi-Fi is everywhere!**

#5 – Prayer should include seeking forgiveness and restoration

- In Solomon's seven prayer petitions – notice there are **many cases where things are happening because of the people's sin and disobedience towards God – in fact – Solomon points out in v46 – there is no one that does not sin**
- And so, **his prayer is that the people would turn back to God and repent of their sin – then God would forgive their sins**
- Even in the case of the people being in captivity in a foreign land because of their sin and disobedience – **Solomon prays that God would cause their captors (v50) to show mercy**

[PowerPoint 6-#5 Forgiveness and restoration]

- 5th point is **prayer should include seeking forgiveness and restoration – we must be constantly examining our hearts – King David prays in **Psalm 139 24** – *for God to see if there is any offensive way in him and lead him in the way everlasting***

- As we pray and genuinely confess our sins before God – **we receive forgiveness and our relationship with God is once again restored**
- As 1 John 1:9 reminds us *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
- Just like the people of Israel were in exile because of their sin – we too are in a kind of exile because of our sins
- But just like there is a way back to God for the people in exile by repenting – there is a way back to God for us - as we pray and confess our sins, repent and believe in the death of God's Son, Jesus, for the forgiveness of our sins - **and as we believe in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus - for eternal life**
- **God's forgiveness and restoration** is not a one-off exercise though – **we need to continue to repent of our sins** – and we can draw confidence – from the truth - **that we have Jesus interceding for us from Heaven** (Rom 8:34) and have confidence in knowing - **Jesus has left us with the Holy Spirit** who convicts us of our sins (John 16:8) and guides us in all truth (John 16:3)
- **As well as praying for our own forgiveness** - we can be asking for God to be speaking to other people's hearts [as Solomon did] and stirring them to repentance and asking God to forgive their sins as well.

#6 – Prayer should include mission and outreach

- Notice when Solomon was praying for foreigners in verses 41-43 – we see that God is available to all nations - and that **Solomon actually prays** (v43) that **ALL peoples of the Earth** - may know God's name and fear God.
- What a wonderful prayer – that all people everywhere would know God and have a reverent fear of God
- [Explain knowing God – AND – explain reverent fear]

[PowerPoint 7-#6 Mission and Outreach]

- **6th point** – our prayers need to include praying for those who don't know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour – would come to believe in Jesus - and be saved for Heaven
- We can be **praying that more people would join us on Sundays** – and that God would bring more children to Friday and Sunday Jaffa
- And **our prayers should also be for Mission and outreach** – that God would raise workers for the harvest and that these mission workers would bear fruit – and fruit that lasts – and expand God's Kingdom

#7 – God values our prayers and listens

- **7th point** – we have to have 7 points, don't we?

[PowerPoint 8-#7 God values our prayers]

- **God values our prayers** – otherwise He would not refer to His Temple - as a House of prayer (Isaiah 56:7) - and Jesus would not have got angry at the misuse of the temple as the House of Prayer – in our NT reading
- Solomon finished his prayer in v53 by asking - God to listen to prayers - whenever people cry out? Why? Because Israel was God's chosen possession out of all the nations.
- Solomon's reasoning was if Israel is God's people, then God will surely listen and answer
- For us – as Christians – we are God's special possession through faith in Jesus (1 Peter 2:9) – and **we have Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount** –
- *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)*

- *Jesus goes on to say: If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!* (Matthew 7:11)
- But remember as we pray and ask God for His help – it must be according to God’s will
- As 1 John 5:14-15 says:
- *¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*

Conclusion

To **finish up** then...

Solomon saw the Temple - as a **House of Prayer**

In our NT passage **Jesus got angry** because the Temple – The House of prayer - had been turned into a den of robbers –by making the Temple courts a marketplace – fulfilling a prophecy from Jeremiah 7:11 (see also Isaiah 56:7)

But as Jesus stood there in the Temple Courts – **Amazingly** – He’s answering Solomon’s prayers for God to forgive His people– Because **Jesus is the replacement to this Temple – His body is the Temple – He is the High Priest – He is the perfect once and for all sacrifice – He is the one who is fully obedient to all God’s commandments – He is the one who will welcome – the prostitutes, the tax-collectors, the poor, the sick and the disabled- the ones who have been shut out of the Temple – because they are outcasts – or because they can’t afford the rip off prices for the animal sacrifices** that the traders in the temple court are charging.

In righteous anger - **Jesus turns the temple upside down** – overturning tables and opening animal cages – and **Jesus calls everyone** to come to Him in repentance and find forgiveness of their sins!

THAT physical Temple no longer exists – instead - we have a Spiritual Temple - where Jesus is the chief cornerstone of that spiritual temple - and we are living stones built up into this spiritual temple.

Collectively however – we do have a physical building – our church - where we pray together - and our church - is a House of Prayer.

But what about our individual homes?

Are our individual homes - houses of prayer?

(pause)

[PowerPoint 9-Luke 18:1]



To **finish up** then in Luke chapter 18 – **Jesus told a parable** of a widow who kept asking a judge to give her justice against her adversary – eventually the judge gave her justice.

Luke 18:1 says **Jesus told this parable** to show His disciples that – *they should always pray and not give up!*

In our houses of prayer – at home - we must do the same – **always pray** and **never give up!**

Let's pray now...

Father God, thank You that there is none like You

Thank You for the gift of prayer

Help us to commit to praying regularly – about everything – in all places – constantly repenting and seeking Your forgiveness and restoration

Thank You that You are sovereign in all things – and that you do answer in Your own perfect way and timing.

Help us to always pray and never give up.

In Jesus Name, we pray, Amen