

The Tabernacle: God's Blueprint for Relationship, Part 6

Exodus 25:8-9 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwelt among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

The entire purpose of the Tabernacle was so that a holy God could have a relationship with sinful people. But this relationship would only function properly if the people put the tent together right; if they did, then God promised that He would show up with His power and provision!

The Tabernacle was God's ORIGINAL BLUEPRINT for relationship, and it foreshadows everything else that comes later in the Word of God. In other words, our relationship with God must follow the same pattern!

In previous lessons, we've dealt with the three components of God's "vertical" plan of SALVATION – BLOOD, WATER and SPIRIT. They are pictured in the Brazen Altar, Brazen Laver and the Ark of the Covenant. They pointed ahead to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection ... and they are fulfilled in our obedience through repentance, water baptism, and receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Today, we want to continue dealing with the three components of God's "horizontal" plan of SANCTIFICATION – WITNESS, PRAYER and WORD. They are pictured in the Golden Candlestick, the Altar of Incense and the Table of Shewbread – all located in the Holy Place. **WITNESS is "me talking to others."** **PRAYER is "me talking to God."** **The WORD is "God talking to me."** All are necessary in my daily walk with the Lord.

(VIDEO CLIP FOR TEXT)

Exodus 30:1-10 ¹ And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. ² A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. ³ And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. ⁴ And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. ⁵ And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. ⁶ And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. ⁷ And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. ⁸ And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. ⁹ Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. ¹⁰ And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

The chief purpose of the Altar of Incense was to **OFFER INCENSE**, just as the church is to offer **PRAYER** to our Lord Jesus Christ. **PRAYER means "ME TALKING TO GOD."**

From the time of the Tabernacle and all through the Bible, incense always speaks to us of the prayer of the people of God. It begins on the altar with man, and as it "burns" it ascends upward to God. The incense didn't "work" until it was SET ON FIRE.

Psalm 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Revelation 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Acts 10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Revelation 8:3-5 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

The Golden Altar of Incense was the HIGHEST piece of furniture in the Tabernacle, and it was also the CENTRAL piece of furniture (in the center of the 'cross'). These types speak of the IMPORTANCE of prayer – it is the HEART of our relationship with God.

The Altar of Incense was the NEAREST piece of furniture to the Ark of the Covenant and the Shekinah presence of God; only the veil separated them. This is why this Altar was also called "the altar before the Lord."

Leviticus 16:12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail:

Just like the Brazen Altar, the Altar of Incense had **FOUR HORNS** on its corners. Horns in Scripture are figurative of power and strength, since they are the chief source of **ATTACK** and **DEFENSE** for animals that have them. This type speaks of the **POWER** of prayer.

Psalms 18:1-2 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my **strength**, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the **horn** of my salvation, and my high tower.

Every morning and evening, the High Priest had **TWO TASKS**:

- To replenish the oil in the Golden Candlestick (**WITNESS**)
- To burn incense at the Golden Altar of Incense (**PRAYER**)

Exodus 30:7-8 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every **morning**: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall **burn incense** upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at **even**, he shall **burn incense** upon it, a **perpetual incense** before the LORD throughout your generations.

Acts 2:42 And they **continued stedfastly** in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and **in prayers**.

Colossians 4:2 **Continue in prayer**, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Romans 12:12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; **continuing instant in prayer**;

Ephesians 6:18 **Praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all **perseverance** and supplication for all saints;

The two tasks of the High Priest are the same two tasks we have been left on earth to perform – **WITNESS** and **PRAYER**. We talked about witnessing last week; today we'll talk about praying ...

God can talk to us in many ways, but we can only communicate with Him in one way – through **PRAYER**. That's why it is vital that we establish prayer as a **DAILY** habit.

PRAYER means "**ME TALKING TO GOD.**" **Some suggestions**:

1. Have a specific **TIME** for prayer.

Psalms 55:17 **Evening**, and **morning**, and at **noon**, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

2. Have a specific **PLACE** for prayer.

Mark 1:35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into **a solitary place**, and there prayed.

3. Have a specific **ROUTINE** for prayer.

Luke 22:39 And he came out, and went, **as he was wont**, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.



Matthew 6:9-13 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

THE DIFFERENCE

I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish that I didn't take time to pray.

Problems just tumbling about me, and heavier came each task;
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered. He answered: "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty – but the day toiled on, gray and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me, He said: "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence, I used all my keys at the lock
God gently and lovingly chided: "My child, you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning and paused before entering the day;
I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray.