



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Prayer on Purpose  
Pastor Stephen Hayes  
Sunday Aug 26, 2018

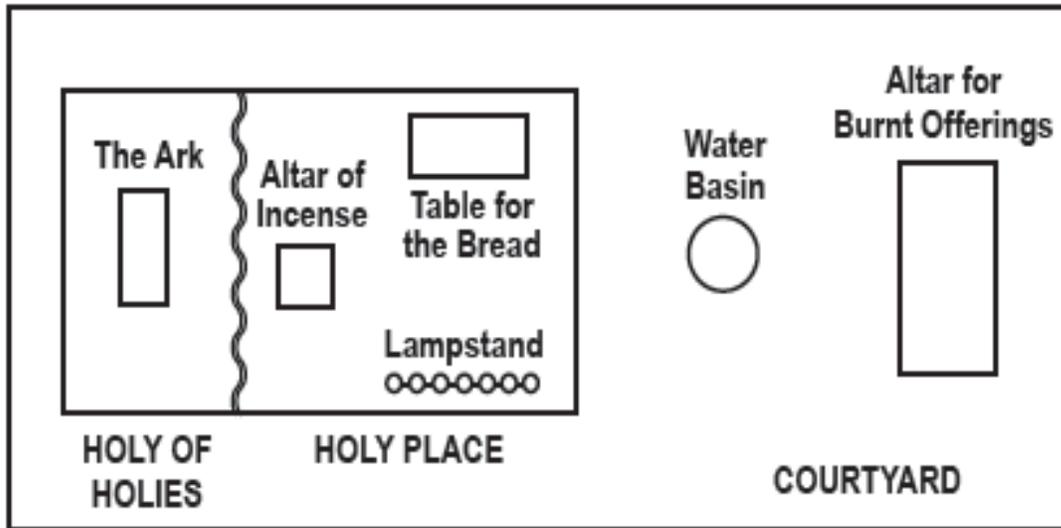
**Main Idea** – God wants to guide you as you go through life. For that to happen, you have to know how to talk to Him. The layouts of the Old Testament desert tabernacle and the Jerusalem temples show us how to have meaningful prayer conversations with God.

### A Quiet time with God

- Life is hectic. We each need time to slow down and pause from our activities to spend quiet time with God.
- When you talk to God, don't be afraid to be honest with Him. Express to Him exactly what you are thinking or feeling. He will not be threatened by your honesty. There are numerous instances in the Bible where individuals were free to be honest with God.
- God will respond to your honesty by guiding you to the best way of talking with Him.

### The tabernacle and temple as maps of how to talk (pray) with God

- **Exodus 26** contains God's very specific description of how He wanted the desert tabernacle to look. This description also influenced how the temples in Jerusalem later looked. Following is a simple diagram of how the desert tabernacle looked.
- Each element in the tabernacle represents a prayer step in talking to God.
- The present day Western Wall in Jerusalem is very close to the location where the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the main temple in Jerusalem.



### Station 1

- The first station in the tabernacle was the outer courtyard. Any Israelite was allowed here: both those who were mature in the things of God, and those who weren't.
- Individuals entered the courtyard with joy.
- **Psalm 100: 1-5 – Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing, know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations. (NKJV)**
- Likewise, we should begin our prayer conversations with God with joyful expectation and thankfulness.

### Station 2

- The second station was the altar where animal sacrifices were offered as payment for sins. (The famous story of Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers in **Matthew 21: 12-13** took place at this location of the temple courtyard.)
- Because Jesus paid the final sacrifice for our sins, animal sacrifices are no longer needed. In the place of the altar, we have the symbol of the cross on which He was crucified in our minds.
- After we have entered prayer with joyful expectation, we should focus our attention on Jesus' sacrifice.

- **Psalm 103: 1-5 – Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (NKJV)**
- **Philippians 2: 9-11 – Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NIV)**

### Station 3

- Next is the laver, or water basin. Here the priests would wash their hands to remove dirt as they moved closer to God's presence.
- As we move closer to God in prayer we should analyze our hearts and motives as we approach Him.
- At this point in prayer, we want to identify anything in our souls that needs to be corrected in order to best communicate with Him.
- **Romans 12: 1 – Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.**

### Station 4

- The lampstand had seven branches of candlesticks. It was light in a dark place.
- Today, in prayer, the lampstand represents the Holy Spirit. After being prepared by the previous steps we are in a position to be illuminated, and receive what the Holy Spirit has for us.
- **Isaiah 11: 2 – The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (NKJV)**

### Station 5

- The table of shewbread represents the Word of God in our lives and prayers.
- What God said in the Bible should be part of our conversations with Him. We should know what is in the Bible, meditate on it, and use it in our prayers.
- **Joshua 1: 8 – The Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (NKJV)**

## **Station 6**

- At the altar of incense the priests would recite all the different names of God. This was another form of praise and worship as they moved ever closer to Him.
- As we move closer to God in our prayers, we will find all our previous worries and concerns seem to melt away. What bothered us about our personal issues will become almost irrelevant to us.

## **Station 7**

- Only the high priest was allowed into the Holy of Holies, which contained the Ark of the Covenant.
- In the Holy of Holies the priest would come to intercede for the Israelite people.
- Because of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice for our sins, all believers have direct access to God's throne.
- Here, at the deepest part of our prayers, it's not about us. We should use this opportunity to intercede for others; to pray that they too may gain access to God through faith in Jesus.

## **Reflective Questions for Prayer on Purpose**

1. Pastor Stephen said that prayer is spending quiet time to have an honest conversation with God. Have you found it easy, or hard, to be honest with God when you pray? Why did you answer the way you did?
2. The desert tabernacle is a picture – or metaphor – for how we can use prayer to get closer to God. How many of the prayer stations described by Pastor Stephen do you use when you pray? Are there any you need to stop at longer during your prayer time?
3. Why is intercession for others - and not requests about our own circumstances - the main purpose of the final station?