



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC An Altar Not to Miss

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THEME Faith at Home

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

AN ALTAR NOT TO MISS

The prayer altar is an important place. It serves five functions where God is honoured as a family, where restoration happens, where transactions take place, where the Kingdom manifests and where fire is ignited. Hence, we need to build and maintain our altar as it is one that we must not miss out on.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE ALTAR?

1) ALTAR WHERE GOD IS HONOURED AS A FAMILY

We need to build a prayer altar as a family in order to give God the honour He deserves. God wants to be God to the father, family and the generations (Gen 17:7) thereafter. Praying as a family is different from praying individually as He is acknowledged by the generations in the former. Exodus 20:3 commands that we should not have any other gods before God. However, idolatry will happen if He is not honoured and faith is not taught; people will fall away when God is not made a part of our families through deliberately having a family prayer altar. Every member has a part to play in keeping the faith dynamic and alive through the generations.

2) ALTAR WHERE RESTORATION HAPPENS

Family dynamics change over time. When relationships are not managed properly, they can fracture and render prayer ineffective. We must be mindful of our words as they can pierce like swords or bring healing (Prov 12:18). Through our relationships, words used against another can steal a person's identity as they remain operative in the person's life. An altar helps in restoring relationships and allowing a person to make a breakthrough. There are three factors involved in restoration at the altar – repenting, resetting and rebuilding. We need to repent to prevent Satan from having a legal ground, stop negative words from being operative and clear the obstacles to prayers. Resetting means that we need to constantly forgive others. It will also prevent Satan from having a foothold in our lives. Lastly, we need to rebuild our relationships. The altar aids us in dealing with hard issues before God and prevents us from becoming prisoners. God wants our hearts to be right before Him.

3) ALTAR WHERE TRANSACTION HAPPENS

The dynamics of a prayer altar for transaction to happen consists of intentionality, advocacy, laying siege, our faith and our posture. We can see these aspects through the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:25-28. If we are serious about getting something from God, we need to be intentional in prayer. Our earnestness can be seen through our prayer life. In terms of advocacy, we need to raise a case, seek a redress, reason for His promises and be an advocate. We can lay siege of God just like how the Canaanite woman did; she wanted whatever Jesus had for the Jews and refused to let go until she had laid hold of Jesus. God is never reluctant to bless but we need to lay hold of His willingness through prayer. The Canaanite woman showed great faith as she acknowledged Christ as “Lord, Son of David” since this was unusual for a Gentile. In the same way, we show our faith when we acknowledge Christ for who He is in our prayers. As for our posture, we must always go before God in humility. We can transact with God effectively when we approach the altar correctly.

4) ALTAR WHERE THE KINGDOM MANIFESTS

Mark 4:26-28 states that we should do our part in “scattering the seed” for the kingdom of God while allowing God to connect the dots in our lives even if we may not understand. We do this “scattering” by praying at the altar regularly for God to change a person from the inside out. The kingdom of God will manifest in a person as righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17). As the time for the moulding process varies for each individual, we must not give up; some prayers will manifest in an individual’s life only in the long term just like how it took 20 years before Joseph’s two dreams were fulfilled.

5) ALTAR WHERE THE FIRE IS IGNITED

Jesus stated in Matthew 21:13 that His house shall be a house of prayer. It is a place that we build and maintain; the fire at the altar is either burning or smouldering. Leonard Ravenhill once said, “The true church lives and moves and has its being in prayer.” We need to be participants in prayer if we want great things to happen. Knowing the importance of prayer and Matthew 21:13, are we going to value His Word and keep the fire burning strongly through regular prayers for our church?

CONCLUSION

The prayer altar is a place we should not miss out on. It meets five areas in the Christian life. When God is honoured as a family, it meets the divine factor whereby a dynamic faith is passed down through the generations. As a place where restoration happens, it deals with the heart. Approaching the altar in the right manner allows transactions to happen between God and us. The Kingdom of God manifests on earth when we approach the altar and allow God, instead of the world, to mould us such that there will be righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Lastly, the prayer altar is where we, as stewards of God, ignite the fire and keep it burning through covering the church in prayer. What is our personal response towards building our prayer altar?

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the altar a place not to be missed? Which aspect was new or interesting for you?

2. How have you personally experienced any of the 5 aspects? In what ways did it impact your life and the way you view God?

3. What are your obstacles and challenges to building and maintaining your prayer altar? What are some decisions, actions and sacrifices you need to make today to grow that?