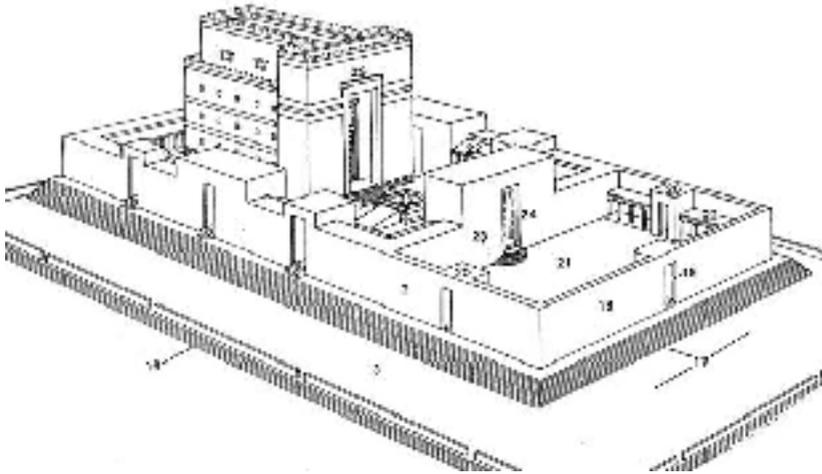


Praying around the Temple



for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations
Isaiah 56:7

**How would Jesus have expected to pray
as he entered the Temple at the start of Holy Week?**

Preparation

Prayer for us is a beautiful way of communicating with God - we can speak to the One who knows, loves and saves us anywhere and at any time. However, the price of this access can be that we risk becoming over-familiar. The Temple was laid out as a series of courts and then buildings and then rooms into which access was increasingly restricted in order to ensure that holiness was taken very seriously. The structure also acted so as to provide a model for our praying - a pattern which has stood the test of time as the right way to approach the Living God and make ourselves right with Him.

I have found the book 'Drawing near to God' by Mark Stibbe incredibly helpful in preparing this.

We gather together, remain quiet for a moment and invite the Holy Spirit to guide us and inspire our praying.

BE STILL, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here;
Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground;
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour He is crowned.
How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace.
No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him;
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

The Gates of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is the act of remember God's acts...

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

Psalm 100:4

What do we have to thank God for? What has he done for us?
The starting point is God's amazing unmerited love for us.

You might not be able to think of specifics, but here are some suggestions to get you going...

- Spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3-14)
- Physical blessings (ps 139)
- Emotional blessings
- Intellectual blessings (Phil 4:8)
- Material blessings
- Relational blessings (Phil 1:3 - marriages, friends, children, Church family)

Use the Post-its, pens and large paper to write up things to be thankful for. If there's something more personal you want to remember then write it below.

Thankful for...

The Court of Praise

Praise is the act of speaking out God's character and being.

My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.
Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young –
a place near your altar,
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.
Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.
Psalm 84:2-4

or as C S Lewis put it 'Praise almost seems to be inner health made audible'.

Archbishop Temple said 'Worship is the submission of our nature to God'.

GOD OF GLORY, we exalt Your name,
You who reign in majesty.
We lift our hearts to You
And we will worship, praise and magnify
Your holy name.

*In power resplendent
You reign in glory,
Eternal King, You reign forever.
Your word is mighty,
Releasing captives,
Your love is gracious,
You are my God.*

GREAT IS THE LORD and most worthy of praise,
The city of our God, the holy place,
The joy of the whole earth.
Great is the Lord in whom we have the victory,
He aids us against the enemy,
We bow down on our knees.

*And Lord, we want to lift Your name on high,
And Lord, we want to thank You,
For the works You've done in our lives;
And Lord, we trust in Your unfailing love,
For You alone are God eternal,
Throughout earth and heaven above.*

Remember : Praise is about giving, not receiving!

God praiseworthy character stems from His holiness - what does that mean to you?

To me, God's holiness means...

Around this section are some of the names of Jesus which represent His nature and character. Read these and make note of any which especially strike you.

Names of Jesus which mean something to me...

The Altar of Sacrifice

We come to a solemn moment. Having approached God, we become aware of our unholiness. We can do nothing about this...

If we claim to be without sin,
we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
1 John 1:8

...but He can!

Let us examine our ways and test them,
and let us return to the Lord.
Lamentations 3:40

Sin effects us in at least two ways...

1. We do something wrong

This separates us from God

We need His forgiveness to restore us

2. We have done something wrong

We feel guilt and shame

We hold back from approaching God

Take your time; name the sin, acknowledge the guilt, look for a change of heart, receive forgiveness, pray for a change of behaviour.

When you are ready, wash your hands in the bowl.

The Holy Place

Having approached the throne of God with confidence we find His grace (Hebrews 4:16); we have thanked and praised, been restored through forgiveness, and we are now in the place to bring to God our petitions (prayers for ourselves) and intercessions (prayers for others).

Come near to God and he will come near to you.
Wash your hands, you sinners,
and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
James 4:8

For ourselves

'Give us today our daily bread' - ask God to supply your basic needs.

What are the things which prevent you from working for the Kingdom each day? - bring those to God

Pray for Spiritual Gifts (e.g. 1 Cor 12:1-11 & Ephesians 4:1-16)

For others

Who are the people God has placed on your heart?

Where are the places that you feel God's compassion for

I commit to intercede for...

The Holy of Holies

We finally enter the holiest place. The empty throne is where God resides, but does not contain Him. The Cherubim circle the throne singing.

Revelation chapters 4 and 5 paint a stunning picture of the throne room.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD,
Holy is the Lord God Almighty,
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord,
Holy is the Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come,
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.

Worthy, worthy, worthy is ... (etc.)

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is ... (etc.)

Glory, glory, glory to ... (etc.)

This is the place where we stand before God and we run out of words to say to Him. This is the place of intimacy with the awesome Creator of the Universe who longs for relationship with those He has made and whom He loves

Thy Kingdom Come. Between Ascension and Pentecost we will be joining the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative. This gazebo will remain here until then and we will invest in our prayers by writing names and situations for prayer and leaving them here to be prayed over