

Praise!

Psalm 22:22

I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

What is Praise?

The Oxford American Dictionary defines praise as...

1. To express approval or admiration of
2. To honor (God) in words

My personal definition of praise is the honest, heart-felt expression of God's greatness and majesty.

While praise is not the only important aspect of a Christian's life, it is without doubt one of the most important. David indicated it was key to our entering into the very presence of God...

Psalm 22:3

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Jesus also instructed us that Praise should begin and end our prayers...

Matthew 6:9-13

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 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.

Praise seems to be an important key that helps unlock the door to God's presence!

Why do we praise God?

- Scripture commands it...
Psalm 72:15
Psalm 113:3
- Because God is worthy...
Psalm 18:3
- Because God is righteous...
Psalm 7:17
- Because we have an awesome respect (fear) of God...
Psalm 22:23
- Because God helps us...
Psalm 42:5
- Because God hears our cries...
Psalm 118:21
- Because of our health...
Psalm 43:5
- Because God delivers us from the tongues of other...
Psalm 52:9 (read entire chapter)
- Because God avenges us...
Judges 5:2
- Because praise defeats depression...
Isaiah 61:3
- Because praise brings victory...
II Chronicles 20:22

These are just some of the reasons for which we should praise God. Many more are indicated in Scripture and encountered by each of us every day that we live. Psalm 150 helps to sum it up well...

Psalm 150:2

Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

In other words..."Praise God for what He does and praise Him for the greatness of who He is."

What are our responsibilities in praise?

Our praise must be of God...

"My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation..." Psalm 22:25

Mankind will praise something. For many it will be a sporting event, an automobile, a job or any number of other things.

As a Child of God we should be known for our praise of Him, not the other things of life. What we concentrate our praise on will demonstrate where our praise is concentrated regardless of where we say our devotion lies.

What do you find yourself talking about and praising most of the time (especially in God's House)? What do others hear you praise or speak of most often? Is it God or something else?

We must praise God regardless of our own feelings...

"...Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21

Even after losing everything he had, Job praised God. Feelings about his present circumstances did not enter into his decision. God was still God.

Because of who God was, He still deserved praise. Personal feelings do not lessen the greatness of God!

One of the most critical errors people make about praise is thinking that praise is only for when the "feeling" is there. We often think praise is for those times when we have everything going our way.

When God does something for us, we praise Him. When we cannot see God doing anything we don't remember or feel the need to praise Him.

PRAISE IS NOT DEPENDENT ON OUR OWN FEELINGS.

PRAISE IS ONLY DEPENDENT ON THE WORTHINESS OF THE ONE WE PRAISE

We must praise God with our whole heart...

"Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation." Psalm 111:1

Half-hearted praise has no place in the Kingdom of God. God never performed anything half-hearted, but to the fullest extent needed. He robed Himself in flesh, not using someone else. He died for our sins, not just suffering.

Whole-hearted praise indicates a giving of one's complete self over to praise. Not just in our mind as thoughts. Praise must include the emotions of the heart and the physical expressions as well. Real praise requires a steadfast depth of feeling and convictions that God is able. Real praise requires a physical expression.

In addition, we must be careful not to mistake simple enthusiasm alone for whole-heartedness. The earnestness of praise cannot be measure simply by its loudness or activity. The true measure of praise is its earnestness and honesty toward God.

We must praise God with an upright heart...

"I will praise thee with uprightness of heart..." Psalm 119:7

In our praise and worship we must have proper motives. Exuberant praise should not be used as an attempt to show one's spirituality. Praise must always be done, whether quiet or loud, to show God's greatness and majesty.

The strongest rebuke Jesus Christ ever gave was to the Scribes and Pharisees for being hypocrites.

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Matthew 23:28

Matthew 23:13-19

We must be careful not to fall into the trap of judging a person's spirituality by

their worship and praise alone. Obedience to God's Word and submission to God's leadership and plan will demonstrate that a person's praise and worship are truly with an upright heart.

We must praise God in an acceptable manner...

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Genesis 4:7 (see verses 4-8)

Cain offered sacrifice to God that was not accepted. Cain went through the motions correctly. He built an altar, used fire and went through the correct steps but God did not accept it. It was not a blood sacrifice. His sacrifice itself was in error.

Cain worshipped...but not in an acceptable manner.

That which was offered wasn't acceptable.

The two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, offered incense to God that was not accepted by God. They appeared to have done everything correct.

None could tell they their worship was any different, except God. They were slain by God for offering "strange fire" before the LORD.

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD." Leviticus 10:1-2

It is critical that we praise God in an acceptable manner!

What we offer as praise must be correct and Biblical. The effort for our praise must be pure and come from a repentant heart.

Cain offered the wrong sacrifice and was not accepted. We can expect no less of a standard from God. Fanaticism and non-scriptural methods of praise and worship will not be accepted.

Nadab and Abihu used a source of fire that was not commanded by God. We must be very careful that the source of our praise and worship is correct.

The fire for the incense was supposed to come from the brazen altar (a type of repentance). Our praise and worship must surely come from a repented heart

that is humble before God.

Psalm 72:15

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

Psalm 113:3

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised.

Psalm 18:3

3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

Psalm 7:17

17 I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

Psalm 22:23

23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

Psalm 42:5

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

Psalm 118:21

21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

Psalm 43:5

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Psalm 52:9

9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.

Judges 5:2

2 Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

Isaiah 61:3

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

2 Chronicles 20:22

22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.