

# MYHOP



## MY HOUSE OF PRAYER

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**Isaiah 56:7** - *“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.”*

**Matthew 21:13** - *“And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”*

**Mark 11:17** - *“And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.”*

**Luke 19:46** - *“Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.”*

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**We** have all heard of the accounts in the scriptures concerning the statement that God’s “House” is to be known as a “House of Prayer.” This basic, simple truth that Jesus, as well as the Prophet Isaiah declared, has been a “rallying” cry for many a church throughout the “church era.” Many local Bodies of Christ, as well as national and international ministries, have taken up this mantle and established “Houses of Prayer” or they may be called something else, that are heeding this decree of Jesus. For this I am in full agreement and desire to see this prayer and worship move of God escalate in all aspects of the Body of Christ.

**H**owever, for our discussion, I would like to put aside the aspect of the corporate Body’s desire to establish their ministries as “houses of prayer” and focus in on the aspect which I refer to as “My House of Prayer.” In some circles it may be thought of as “MyHOP.” I would like to encourage and exhort each of us within the Body of Christ to not only participate in and be a part of a local Body of Christ (a church or ministry) that is a 24 hour/ 7 day a week place for worship and prayer, but also for ourselves, individually, to truly be what we were created and called to be.

Jesus declared that *“My house shall be called a house of prayer.”* We know that Jesus was in the actual Temple and that He was, at that time, declaring and decreeing that His people had lost the true understanding of the purpose of the Temple as the place of true worship unto the Lord, God - Yahweh Adonai.

There was only one Temple, the Temple in Jerusalem, which stood upon what has become known as the “Temple Mount.” The Temple was designed and given under the holy inspiration of God to David, built by Solomon and then after its destruction by the Babylonians, Ezra was inspired by God to rebuild it upon the return of the exiles from Babylon. At the time of Jesus, King Herod had mounted a tremendous renovation and expansion of the entire Temple Mount area and made it a magnificent sight for all to behold for miles around.

**A** brief, simplistic, overview of the Temple was that it contained three essential areas - the outer court (referred to at that time as the “court of the priests”), the holy place (referred to at that time as the “sanctuary”), and the Holy of Holies. There were extensions and additions to the Temple surrounding these three main areas which we will not be going into as they have no bearing on our discussion at this time. The primary section was the Holy of Holies. Here was to be found the Ark of the Covenant which represented the presence of God, not just within the Temple, but it was also to represent the presence of God in the midst of His people. After the first destruction of the Temple at the time of the Babylonian exile, the Ark of the Covenant has

never been found. Since that time, up until the Temple was again destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans, the Holy of Holies had been empty. The Ark of the Covenant was not in the Holy of Holies during Jesus' life as He visited the Temple.

**W**hat is ironic was that the Ark of the Covenant was to represent the presence of God within the Temple. However, it was not there. It was not in the Temple. The priests continued to perform the sacrifices and rituals that were to be offered unto the Lord just as if it had been there. Symbolically, the presence of God was not there in the Temple. They were doing all that they thought and knew was correct. They most likely were thinking, "Hey, this is what we do in Temple whether God is here or not." The essence of the presence of God was not in their midst. Along comes Jesus who is God incarnate, the actual presence of God in their midst. They reject Him, thereby rejecting the actual presence of God in their midst. Jesus comes to the Temple, looks around at what was happening, clears out the temple area and declares that His Father's House shall be called and is, a House of Prayer. He did not seem to be too pleased with all their "doing what we do stuff," did He?

**F**or those of us who have received Jesus into our lives and hearts, the scripture tell us that we are now the "temple of the Holy Spirit," or in other words, the "house of God." Each one of us is a "piece," a "stone" if you will, of the total House of God. Being that each of us are a piece of the total, we are looked upon as being the very thing that we are a part of - the House of God - the place where God's presence now dwells, here upon this earth. Please, refer to the following well known scriptures:

**1Corinthians 3:16, 17** - *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."*

**2Corinthians 6:16** - *"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

**Ephesians 2:19-22** - *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."*

**1Peter 2:4-5** - *"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."*

**W**hen we read Jesus' statements in the Gospels concerning the Temple, yes, He was referring to the actual, physical building in which He was standing in at that time. However, He was also referring to a time that would shortly come thereafter when the "House of God/ House of prayer" would be found within those who have come to believe, accept and receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. It would be found in those whose spirit would be regenerated by the Holy Spirit to now become the resting place where God's presence would then choose to dwell. We, as the Body of Christ are now, individually, and collectively as we gather corporately, the "House of God/ House of prayer."

**W**hat does it mean to be a “house of prayer?” The role model we have is the actual physical Temple as seen in the scriptures. It was a place where constant sacrifices and sweet fragrances were being offered up to the Lord. These sacrifices and sweet fragrances, represented worship and prayer. They were to be continually brought forth and offered unto the Lord - 24 hours a day/ 7 days per week/ all year long.

**W**hat does this say to us today? What am I suggesting? Am I saying and suggesting that in order for us to be that “house of prayer” that the Lord desires for us to be, we need to stop everything we are doing - stop working, stop going to school, abandon our families, stop all our church activities and drop down to our knees and just worship, pray and seek after God, 24 hours a day/ 7 days per week/ all year long? Well - YES!!! - Only not in the way that you may be thinking.

**A**ll those things I had mentioned are important and God has called us to do and be a part of the above items and more. It is called, living life and being a responsible child of God. However, in the midst of the above activities we are to be that “house of prayer” that worships, prays, seeks after and “loves on” God 24 hours a day/ 7 days per week/ all year long/ every year for the rest of our lives here on this earth and for eternity. It is called living a lifestyle that flows from the attitude of heart that says in everything I do, in everything I say or wherever I may be - all I desire to do is be that house of worship and prayer that the Lord is seeking to dwell in. The priority and purpose for everything I do in my life, is to just bless the heart of my God. The House of Prayer that Jesus and the scriptures refer to is a place of worship, a place of encounter and intimacy between the believer and their God and He with them - 24 hours a day/ 7 days per week/ all year long. This is what the Father is seeking. (John 4:23, 24)

**M**y question to the Body of Christ, as well as to myself, is this - “If Jesus would come to His temple, my house of prayer (MyHOP) today, would there be a need for Him to “clear it from the money changers and other sources of defilement and pollutants?” Would He find me being the “house of prayer” that he is looking to dwell and rest in and have pleasure in, not just to visit, but to inhabit? Isaiah 66:1 states, *“Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?”* Steven, just before He is stoned restates this in Acts 7:49. However, in Acts 7:47 and 48, Steven declares, *“But Solomon built him an house. **Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet...**”*

**G**od’s desire from the beginning, after the fall of Adam and Eve, was always to restore His prized creation back to being that house, that dwelling place, where His Spirit would again dwell within. Through the final sacrifice of the Blood of Jesus, salvation is now available to anyone who believes in who Jesus is and what He has done. By accepting Jesus into our heart and making Him our Savior and Lord, we are declaring that we are choosing to allow God to be our God and by doing so, we become His people. His Spirit can once again dwell in a “temple” that was not made with human hands, but a temple that was created by God, Himself, for Himself. In other words, those that accept Jesus into their heart and lives now become the Temple/House of God/ House of prayer that He can now dwell in.

**T**hrough Jesus, the believer’s spirit now becomes that “Holy of Holies,” that was once empty, but is now born again, swept clean and filled with God’s Spirit, His presence. God now dwells within the believer’s inner most being. Because of this, there is now a place within every believer where we can encounter God and He can encounter us. It is a place within the believer that becomes the true “Holy of Holies” where His presence can now dwell within. It is a place where we can experience true “oneness” and intimacy with our God, which is a direct answer to the prayer that Jesus prayed in John 17:21 and 22 - *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one...”*

Being in “oneness” with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, is what being the “House of Prayer” is all about. Now, through the Blood of Jesus and the regenerative power of the Spirit, we become that place where God dwells. We now have the ability to experience Him more and more. We experience His love for us. We reciprocate with giving love back unto Him. He pours out His love even more and we pour it back unto Him in personal times of intimacy with Him, as well as in our Christ like lifestyle and character. It becomes a continual cycle of expressions and experiences of love, friendship and intimacy.

Out of that then flows everything else in being the men and women of God that He has called us to be as we sojourn through our time here on this earth. Out of that oneness with Him and being that House of prayer, flows the ability to truly be the Body of Christ. We become the true hands, feet, eyes, ears and mouth of God to this earth - to both, the saved and unsaved. For too long, we have had the “cart in front of the horse.” We have had our programs. We have had our wonderful ministries. We have worked so hard in doing the things of the Kingdom thinking that that would bring His presence in a greater way.

All of these are not wrong in and of themselves. However, if we are honest with ourselves, the things we do sometimes come more from the “arm of the flesh” than from the flowing of the Spirit of God. We do things/programs because “these are what churches do” instead of what the real reason should be - they should flow from out of our intimate times of communion with Him, the Lover of my soul, My Beloved. The reason should not be because these are what “the church does” so we should do them - but rather the reason must be that we are led, guided and directed by Him personally. When this happens then our actions become true acts of worship that are holy and acceptable to Him. We do things not because we should do them but rather because they are the true acts of worship that the Lord is delighting in from us. The question I always ask myself is, “Why am I doing what I’m doing?” Am I doing it to please myself or some person? Or am I doing it because it is what God is truly directing me and leading me to do, therefore I know it will please Him?

It is the same thing with well meaning leaders who, with all good intentions, tell their congregants that they must spend more and more time in and at the church and its functions and programs. Our people buy into that and many times do the works of the Kingdom from “out of the arm of their flesh” or many times out of guilt and condemnation. Not from the leading and freedom of the Lord for them, but from the prompting of their leaders.

The above reminds me of Cain’s offering to God. Programs and activities are sometimes birthed out of what we think God wants from us. They come out of “church growth” manuals and the success that other ministries had because they did these programs and activities. These may be wonderful and may have been good for other people and other ministries but are they what God desires and is calling you and/or the Body of Christ to do in this hour? In contrast, Abel’s offering was what God was seeking after. Abel’s heart was the correct heart. He knew what would delight and be acceptable to God.

The only way Abel would have known what delighted the heart of God was that He spent time in being that “house of prayer.” Cain most likely spent most of his time toiling in his garden and laboring so hard in doing what **he thought** would be pleasing to God, that he did not have time to be that “house of prayer” to actually hear from his God what would be acceptable and pleasing to Him. We know that didn’t work out to well for Cain, did it? This brings us to the scripture found in Revelation 2:2-4 in which Jesus is warning the church in Ephesus, *“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”*

In this hour, God is exhorting His Body to “return to their first love” which is expressed in a lifestyle of worship (not just music and song but in our Christ like lifestyle, behavior, character and actions) as well as our intercession. We must flow as a “house of prayer,” first individually and then corporately. Out of that will flow what God desires for us to do in this hour of Jesus’ soon return, both individually, as well as corporately. It may look and be very different than what we think it should be.

The following is from my good friend Jim Cason, who the Lord has allowed me to connect with through times of worship and intercession. I was sharing my thoughts concerning this discussion with Him. He texted me a few days later with his thoughts below and I thought I would pass it on:

*“This morning I was meditating on your “my hop thing...” This came to me. David was the object of God's Love obsession and the heart of God was the object of David's obsession. His love gift back to the Lord was to build him a house and home full of music and worship on earth. The prophet Isaiah and Jesus himself described this house as a house of prayer (body of Christ). The concept of this house is both spiritually and physically three-dimensional. It is the fiery burning heart of prayer within the individual, it is the corporate identity as these burning hearts come together and cry out from house to house, and finally it's a cry of agreement in worship and intercession across a nation and the world.”*

Unfortunately, many of us have become like the Temple in the time of Jesus’ visitation. It was filled with people who were so busy buying and selling and doing “godly things” that they first of all missed the One who supposedly they came to worship - hey, He was right there- duh!!! Secondly, they were so busy doing it their way that they were perverting and desecrating the House of Prayer. What is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are of the same account. However, the account in John where Jesus clears out the Temple (John 2:14-16) is of an account that occurred earlier in Jesus’ ministry. Obviously, it did not take long for the priests and the people to go back to what they were doing in the Temple area (*Temple as usual*) because we see that Jesus needed to show them this object lesson again and declare the true purpose of the “Temple/House of God/ House of prayer.”

This brings me back to my question - “If Jesus would come to my temple, my house of prayer (MyHOP), today would there be a need for Him to clear it out from the “money changers” and other sources of defilement and pollutants?” That is a question each of us needs to answer honestly. We need to answer it, not with what we think or from our own paradigms, but rather we need to allow the Holy Spirit within to answer it. Am I setting up an altar unto the Lord within my own life? Am I spending quality times of intimacy with the lover of my soul, privately, in my own prayer and worship times or am I depending only on my attendance of the corporate gatherings? Is my lifestyle and all that I do concerning the things of God, motivated truly by the desire to bless the heart of my King and seek His face or I am seeking His hand to see what more I can get and have? Is the desire of my heart to be the “house of prayer” that I was created and destined to be by the Creator and Architect of the true dwelling place that He longs for, desires and seeks to find His resting place in?

Hey, make no mistake, we are accepted and looked upon as holy and righteous by, in and through the Blood of Jesus. Through Jesus we are the children of the Most High God. We are destined for eternal life with our God, forever and ever and ever. So please, do not misunderstand what I am saying. However, even though the above is absolute, we still should have a heart and a desire to be that “house of prayer,” both individually and corporately, that Jesus would love to step into, look around and declare - “Ahhh!! There’s no place like home.”