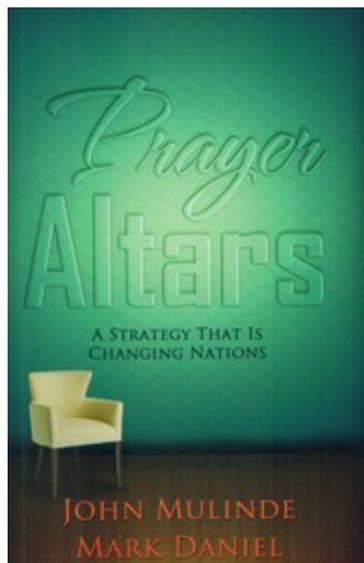


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Extracts from "PRAYER ALTARS" by
John Mulinde and Mark Daniel



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ESTABLISHING A PERSONAL ALTAR

Extract of Chapter 14: Pages 231-246

Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! Psalm 141:2.

Building a personal altar does not mean that you are setting up stones in your house or just having a quiet time in a certain portion of your day. A personal altar is the altar that is built in your heart. The fire of God's presence must be kept burning on this altar so that your communion with God is maintained. You keep that fire strong and your heart open, responsive, and yielded to the Lord.

Understanding that your heart is your personal altar causes you to pay close attention keep a careful and attentive watch over the state of your heart.

When you think of an altar as a time or a place, rather than a lifestyle, then you will believe you are finished communing with God when the time you have set aside for prayer is over. But when you understand that your heart is the altar and that you can live in a state of unbroken communion with God, you will keep watch over it all through the day. You will become sensitive to the fire weakening as you engage in certain conversations or behaviors or expose yourself to certain things, and you will sense attacks coming against your heart. You will know you need to go spend time before the Lord, allowing that fire to be rekindled, protected, and strengthened.

To prepare to build your personal altar, take a few days to fast and pray, spending as much time as you can in prayer and the Word to surrender and dedicate yourself to building the altar. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to set a time and place for your altar, as well as to give you direction for how to build and establish your altar.

Ask God to pull down unholy altars you have raised to idols; this calls for personal examination and sincerity between you and God. Allow the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart and help you deal with areas where idols may be keeping you from full surrender so that you can give yourself to God on your altar as a pure and holy, living sacrifice to the Lord. The Lord will prepare and adjust your inner being (heart) and your external environment so that it is an atmosphere that draws His presence.

Practical Elements of Establishing a Personal Prayer Altar

Prioritize. One of the first practical steps to building a personal altar is to prioritize and to be intentional. You need to set a specific time and place where you are going to spend time with God, seek Him, draw Him, and come into His presence. If you do not set aside a time and place where you can regularly do that, you will never build the spiritual momentum needed to make the prayer altar a vital part of your life, and you will not be able to fight the spiritual warfare coming against you that is trying to keep you from starting the altar and developing this lifestyle of prayer and abiding in communion with God.

Distractions, diversions, discouragements, and many other things will come against you as you build the altar. One of the first battles you may face will be to set aside the time and place for your altar. You are not just trying to find a brief time to set aside for a quick moment with God, to just have a short quiet

time, you are seeking to spend extended time with Him and to truly commune with Him.

The location of your altar is important. It will be your meeting place with God. God says that in the place He allows His name to be honored, there He will come to bless you. It is important that you keep the place as undefiled as possible. The atmosphere of a place is impacted by the activities, conversations, and other sorts of material you allow there. Avoid allowing a radio or TV to spew out ungodly information; let that place be set apart to God. Even if it is your living room or a certain room in a home or other building, the place must be dedicated. Rather than having all kinds of music playing there, try to maintain the atmosphere in a way that will attract the presence of God. This is important whether you are setting up an altar in your home, business, church, or community,

The Spirit of God thrives in the presence of God. Born again believers have the Spirit of God within us, so we require deep communion with Christ if we are going to thrive as believers. This makes it necessary for us to spend at least an hour or two with God every day. This will give us time to seek Him with all of our hearts, respond to Him, and allow our souls to be saturated in Him.

Many people find that they do not develop any depth in the presence of God. This is because they spend short periods of time at their altar. They never really experience that spiritual gateway opening up so that the flow of life can come in to soften their hearts, leading them to a place of yieldedness and surrender before Him so they can abide in His presence.

Therefore, when you first start your altar, remember that one of the first battles is to step across that line of commitment where you say, "Lord, there will be an altar in my heart, and the fire on that altar will not go out. I am going to seek You, I am going to push back the darkness, and I am going to learn how to draw Your presence and live in communion with You. I will set a specific time and place to begin."

The Word. Another practical area to look at is the Word. We need to allow the Word of God to return to being the centerpiece of our lives. To do that, we need to determine that we are going to read the whole Bible. We read the Bible with a desire to see the whole story of God. We don't want to just have a little knowledge of the Bible or be able to quote a few verses that we like because they

encourage us. We want to know the whole story; the whole revelation that God has given us through His Word.

God saw fit to give us the whole Bible, and we need to value and treasure it. Because we know some verses that tell us one thing or another but we don't have the whole context, most of us are missing the depth of meaning that comes from the Bible.

When you read a verse like **Hebrews 4:16**, which says, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne, of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need," you might respond by saying, "Lord, I need mercy." But when you consider the wholeness of the Scriptures, you recall how God is rich in mercy (Eph 2:4), that He is full of mercy (James 3:17), that He gave mercy even to Ahab who was the most wicked king ever (1 King 21:29), that whenever anybody humbled themselves before Him, He never turned away from giving them mercy. When you have the whole context of God's mercy illustrated in the entire Bible inside of you, whenever you read Scripture, God's words will have much more depth and meaning.

People often find it difficult to find meaning in the genealogies, yet when you read the genealogies in the context of the entire Scripture, you realize that God had purpose and intent for every single one of those generations. If you look at how He wove His plans and purposes from one generation to the next, you begin to praise Him for how purposeful He is, how full of intent He is, how He has purpose and destiny for your children and grandchildren, just as He did for those whose names you are now reading. You grasp those kinds of things and they start to stir a greater richness in your understanding of who God is and what He can accomplish.

Reading through the whole Bible is vital. If you read 10 or 15 chapters a day, spending 45 minutes to an hour a day reading the Bible, within 1 year you will have read through the entire Bible about four times. In a few years, you will have read through the Bible so many times that the whole of the Bible will be within you. As you read the Bible, you will have the whole scope of the Word of God in your heart and be able to see His hand, how He moves and operates, what is important to Him, what He values, and what He likes or dislikes.

People often say, "But I want to study. If I am spending time reading the Word, why can't I study?" There is a time to study the Word, but we are emphasizing here that there must be a time for reading the Word at the altar so

that your soul can be saturated in the wisdom, truth, and counsel of God. As you are reading, there will be times when God will point out a theme in the Bible and then show you where the same theme appears all throughout the Scriptures. Jot these down and take note of these references so that you can go back and study them at another time.

I (Mark Daniel) remember when God started showing me references to the Day of the Lord in the Bible. I had no concept of the Day of the Lord. I did not have any depth of teaching or understanding about it, but I started noticing how God referred to it throughout both the Old and New Testament. I realized that it was the climactic event toward which God is building, and I started writing out every verse where God was speaking about that Day, that season of time He calls the last days, and what He was going to do. I kept track of these Scriptures for several weeks. One day, I realized I had a list of 40 to 50 verses, and I started studying.

The magnitude of these verses broke out over my life. I saw so much more depth than I had ever noticed or identified when I had studied a few of these verses during a quiet time.

We encourage you to not just read the Bible to find a quick fix to a problem or a bit of encouragement, comfort, or direction, but to read the whole Bible. Whether you are having a good day or a bad day, keep reading. Even when the enemy tries to convince you that "This part is no good. This is a boring part," or other similar things, just keep reading, esteeming the Word of God, and knowing that it never returns void.

As you keep reading and saturating in the Word, it will grow deeper in your soul. You won't realize how much it is sinking into you, until one day while praying, speaking, sharing, or even in a time of warfare, the words of God will begin to come out of you. It will be like a reservoir erupting and coming forth with great power.

When you first start the discipline of saturating in the Word, the enemy will try to keep the Word from becoming the centerpiece of your life. Your mind will wander; you might start to feel sleepy or to lose your focus. Some people read out loud so their mind stays engaged. Some use phone or tablet apps that read the Word out loud. The app reads a chapter while they read along; this helps keep the momentum going in their hearts.

We encourage you to not give up. As you break through the things the enemy is using to keep you from making saturating in the Word a priority in your life, you will have breakthrough. The Word of God will then be solidly positioned in you and become strong and consistent in your life.

Praise and Worship. Ministering to the Lord is not something we just do for 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of prayer. It is something we stay in a spirit of—an attitude of—throughout our entire altar time. We draw our focus and attention to the Lord, then continue in an attitude of worship and praise. We do this until we break through whatever is trying to steal our focus and our hearts become fixed on Christ.

The more we remain in an atmosphere of praise during a prayer time, the more the depth of our prayer will increase. Even our intercession will be deeper. Instead of it coming from a deep place where we are crying out because we see God's heart desire, it will now come from an even deeper place of faith and trust that God will answer our prayers because we are standing in His presence, confident in who He is, what He has spoken, and what He has promised.

Remember that your heart is the altar. If you spend time in prayer and being before God, praising Him and saturating yourself in His Word and His presence, you will find your faith high, your focus clear, and your heart set on Him. However, if you go through your day without monitoring the fire on the altar of your heart, you will feel the presence of the Lord decreasing. You may notice yourself speaking out negative words of fear, discouragement, or criticism; becoming self-focused; becoming easily offended; and doing other things you normally wouldn't do. These negative attitudes and behavior are rising up because the fire of the altar of your heart is diminishing and changing the atmosphere around you. A practical way to avoid this is to keep your altar burning and to maintain an attitude of praise throughout the day.

People have different ways of praising and worshiping the Lord. Some people use music, some sing songs, and some hallow His name. No matter which is used, the primary goal is to come to a place where their heart is released to God so that they trust Him, believe He is who He says He is, and trust that He will do what He says He will do. Their hearts find rest in Him, and they surrender themselves to Him. They don't hold themselves back, and aren't giving only a part of themselves to Him. They are releasing the sum total of who they are because they know there is no one good but Him. They know there is nothing

greater than Him, nothing that can stop Him, and that He loves them with an everlasting, steadfast love.

As you are in His presence, your heart comes deeper into that place of real trust and rest in the Lord. You are trusting God in the fullness of who He bound Himself in covenant to be, and you are giving yourself fully to Him. The more you pray into that place of release and trust to the Lord, the more your heart stays in a position of surrender, and the more you stay focused on God. Instead of taking 20 minutes to get in His presence in prayer, you can sense His presence within a moment because your heart stays in that soft position before Him.

When you are starting to praise and worship, it sometimes takes more time to draw God's presence. This is because we have lived lives focused on so many other things, but the more you continue to minister to the Lord day by day, the more your heart readily comes into His presence and begins to exalt Him and glorify Him.

One of the things we have found very helpful is following practical advice found in the Bible: to fix our eyes on Christ (Heb 12:1-3). The enemy tries to get us to fix our eyes on anything but Christ. Many times, the reason praise is needed to saturate the whole atmosphere is because the enemy is throwing fear, circumstances, or self-focused things at us to try to get us to shut down and lose our focus. In fact, as you look at the things the enemy is using to distract you, you will feel yourself pulling away from the Lord. To pull yourself back, go into praise, worship, and prayer, setting your eyes on Christ. Speak to your soul, to the spiritual realm, and to the Lord, declaring who He is, how great He is, how glorious He is, how magnificent He is, and how there is no one like Him. Continue to speak out those words, fixing your eyes and attention on Him.

Warfare. Another area where we have some practical suggestions is the area of warfare. As you build your personal altar—this spiritual gateway—the spiritual realm will become very real in the physical realm and you will begin to notice an openness between you and God. There will be a flow of life and an ease of access into His very throne room. You will have a heightened sensitivity to His Spirit, to the Word, to prayer, and to worship. You will experience a flow of life that is continuously refreshing and renewing you. However, as time goes by, you will also sense that the enemy is trying to close that opening. You will feel him trying to decrease, tighten up, or shut down that spiritual gateway.

You will have to fight for your altar, contending for the time. Challenges will come against you to try to shorten or disrupt the time, or to cause you to get discouraged and put off your altar time. There will be things that distract you while reading, trying to make you lose interest in the Word, or you may find your mind wandering while trying to read. You might also find yourself spending more time in the Word and very little time in prayer and communion with God.

We have all experienced these kinds of warfare. You must fight what comes against you and your altar. You will need to make choices to keep the altar a priority in your life and you be determined to spend adequate time at the altar. If you notice the Word coming under attack, consider reading both in the morning and in the evening, determined to be before the Lord and going deeper in the Word. If the level of worship and praise has decreased, choose to spend more time in worship and prayer, during your heart out before the Lord because you can discern that the enemy is strategically trying to shut down your time of worship and praise.

Remember that your heart is the altar. As you go throughout your day, your heart will come under attack. All types of things, including fear, discouragement, temptations, or offenses will come against you and hit your heart. It will seem like an arrow got through your armor and has caused a stirring or shaking in your heart. Because you know your heart is the altar, you will not wait for your prayer time the next morning to deal with it; you will deal with the issue immediately.

You may pull aside, go before the Lord, and go into repentance because you realize you have allowed something into your heart. You may go for a walk or be in your car and begin to praise the Lord, turning your eyes and your attention to Him. Your praise will push away the darkness that was trying to come in. You may go home after a difficult day and feel your heart desiring to shut down, but you choose to saturate in the Word. After an hour of being before the Lord, you can sense your heart beginning to open back up. Anybody maintaining the fire on the altar of their heart realizes that the time spent in the morning with the Lord is not adequate to keep the fire burning; you must keep watch over your heart all throughout the day so the fire can stay strong.

Finally, we strongly suggest that you also be part of a corporate altar. This could be your family, church, ministry, or workplace. We all need to have a personal altar as well as to be involved in a corporate altar because there are times when our personal altars come under attack. Corporate altars help keep the

fire burning in our hearts because the faith of others gives us strength. Their praise opens things over us, and their focus on God renews our focus on the Lord. Being part of a corporate altar is vital to our spiritual lives.

Recent Testimonies of Personal Prayer Altars

One of the things that has come from the thousands of testimonies we have heard about personal altars is the truth that saturating in the Word of God, praising God, and coming into the presence of God will change people's lives more than anything they will ever do in all of their Christian life. As they have given themselves to keeping that fire burning in their heart, it has developed a consistency, a depth, and an anchor that carries them through the storms of life. As they fight for that altar to be maintained, even as the gates of hell rise up against them, they find the strength of God to carry on and to fulfill His purposes. The personal altar has helped the purposes of God prevail in their life.

The following testimony of a personal altar is from a young woman from the UK:

This young woman had gone through a lot of difficulties and traumas in her life. She had tried to take her life twice. She was in a constant state of anxiety, had frequent panic attacks, lived in depression, had trouble sleeping, and was on pain medication. She could not be left on her own because she was having so much difficulty coping. She was not able to keep a job or function in society.

She had heard the message of surrender that World Trumpet Mission carries and had seen what it meant to truly give up her life and to take hold of the life Christ offered her. But she still found it difficult to sustain this surrendered life. She didn't know how to not fall back into the prison cells of depression, anxiety, woundedness, and despair, which surrounded her and filled her with condemnation.

As this young woman began to build her personal altar, she started to see God breaking the grip of darkness over her life and filling her life with His presence. She came to the altar daily and saturated in the Word of God, allowing it to wash her soul day by day. Her soul became more and more aware of how great, awesome, powerful, glorious, and beautiful God was. Instead of being self-focused, self-centered, and filled with a negative view of herself, her focus began to turn more and more

toward God. She became consumed with who God is and what He can do, how awesome and glorious and fierce He is.

Even though she was not an extremely expressive person, she learned how to express her adoration and exaltation to Him. Her heart began to open up and the chains began to come off. In her personal altar, she started to encounter the presence of God. She experienced His love, beauty, and sweetness, and this began to change her whole personality. Her heart opened up so that life, love, peace, and joy could flow inside of her.

This young woman then started to care for the purposes of .. God, and longed to see them prevail in her land. She gave herself to training, even wanting to be a missionary and carry the message of transforming revival into her nation. God began to use her, opening opportunities to her, and making ways for her life to be productive for the kingdom of God.

As her personal altar went deeper and further, this young lady continued to grow spiritually and emotionally. Every time we saw her, we could see that she had grown even more. She was experiencing more liberty and coming into more of the things of God. She has become a beautiful woman of God.

This young woman, who had never—not even one day in her life—considered having her own family, is now married, has a child, and is serving as a missionary for World Trumpet Mission. All this came about through the personal altar she built, which God used to rebuild and refashion her life to become productive for His kingdom.

Some of the most amazing testimonies we hear are from Taiwan. The Taiwanese are resistant to Christ. They believe that if they give their life to Christ they will no longer be able to honor their ancestors, which is very, very deep-rooted in their traditions. Of the hundreds of testimonies we have heard from Taiwan of people who have started personal prayer altars, every one of them has led somebody in their family to Christ. As these believers drew the presence of God in their prayer altars, their families, friends, and neighbors began to be led to Christ.

One woman shared a testimony about her mother-in-law:

This woman's in-laws did not like her and did not want her in their family. They didn't even want her around, so they never came to visit her and they never let her come to visit them. During the Chinese New Year, families in Taiwan usually get together for 2 weeks of the year. But for this woman, every Chinese New Year, she would send the children off with her husband to go to her in-laws' house while she stayed home alone. This went on for 12 or 13 years.

She began to establish an altar of prayer, seeking to draw the presence of God into her home. As the presence of God drew near, He began to deal with the woundedness, bitterness, and resentments that were in her heart. This began to change things. Even her faith began to rise up.

A few months after the woman started her personal altar, her husband and children went to visit her in-laws for the Chinese New Year. When they came home, they brought food that her mother-in-law had sent back for her. Her husband said, "My mother wants you to have this." "Are you sure it is for me?" she asked. "Yes," he said. "It's for you." Incredulous, she asked again, "Are you sure she said to give this to me?" "Yes!" And she was thinking, "Wow, God!"

A few weeks later her mother-in-law came to visit. She had never visited in those 12 or 13 years. The lady's mother-in-law said, "Next Chinese New Year you need to come with your family to our house." The mother-in-law came by again and again, and the woman started to share her testimony of what Christ had done in her life. Before long, the woman led her mother-in-law to the Lord.

Practical Look at a Personal Altar

Everywhere in the world, spending time with God at the altar looks different to everyone, but there are some common denominator. Many people get up early in the morning so they have a significant amount of time to spend with God (90 minutes to 2 hours). They may start by saturating in the Word of God for an hour, just reading the Scriptures. They might read 10 chapters of the Bible, then allow the Word of God to wash over them. They are reading with the desire to know God more. They are looking for the God of the Bible to be revealed to them. When they are finished reading for the day, they bookmark where they

finished reading so they pick up from that point tomorrow. Their goal is to know God and His ways by reading straight through the whole Bible so they know the story of God.

After they finish their Bible reading, they spend time hallowing the name of the Lord. They have just spent time reading the Word looking for how the Word reveals God and His character, and then they spend time meditating on what they learned about God praising Him, acknowledging His power, sovereignty, author greatness, and beauty. They soak in the truth of who God is, going deeper in that, allowing the atmosphere of the room and their heart to become full of the knowledge, wonder, and beauty of who God is.

Many times, worship will continue with singing and music, the person will allow his heart to be swept away in the a sphere of worshiping and praising God. In that atmosphere presence becomes stronger as the focus is no longer distract the challenges of the day or they circumstances he may be facing, He can now allow himself to be led by the Spirit in prayer take his petitions to God, interceding for concerns he may have. As he goes deeper in the Lord, he starts sense God's heart for his family, his city, even things in his life that are not aligned with God's way. His prayers come out of that high place in God's presence.

For this to happen, we must make sure we have an extended time of 90 minutes to an hour with the Lord so prayer is not rushed and we are not constantly looking at our clock. We must allow enough time for the Spirit to take prayer where He wants, for Him to take it deeper and further.

The more we come into God's presence on a daily basis, the more His presence changes the atmosphere and we can tell when His presence is being hindered. We can keep the fire of the altar going through prayer, continually being in His presence. As we are in intercession, He will reveal His heart to us, show us ways darkness is trying to push against us, give us prophetic insight into the ways to advance His purposes, and unfold the things of His kingdom before us as we abide in His presence throughout our day.

The Bible tells of people who were walking personal altars, living sacrifices, to the Lord. These people had great impact whenever they entered a territory. King David practiced living in the presence of God. By the time he was brought before King Saul for the purpose of soothing him with music, he was literally casting demons out each time he played his harp (1 Sam 16:14-23). He was a

moving altar, so when he played the harp, the manifest presence of God came down, and no demon can withstand that presence.

The apostle Peter's shadow healed people wherever he walked (Acts 5:15-16), and even while in prison the apostle Paul would pray over handkerchiefs or other clothing and they would carry the anointing to heal (Acts 19:11-12). Why? Because both these men spent time in the presence of God and followed God's agenda for each season.

Jesus Christ remains the ultimate example of a personal altar. In the account of the madman of the Gerasenes in Mark 5:1-13, the Bible tells us that this man was so strongly possessed by a legion of demons that nothing could hold him down. He was naked and lived among the tombs, cutting himself with stones. The local people would chain him to stop him from hurting himself, but he would break those chains as though they were pieces of straw. However, the demons had a strong reaction to Jesus.

Jesus, the most powerful personal altar, did not say a word, yet the demons in the man were fearful of being tormented. They asked Jesus to let them go into the pigs rather than be totally cast out of the area. That is how powerful the presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, was; He simply showed up, then demons exposed themselves to Him and left the people they had possessed. This level of spiritual authority is attained through relationship and fellowship with God.

I (John Mulinde) have had this experience many times in ministry. I have been to places that have been very "hard ground" for other people, yet the Lord opened doors for me in a very special way. I had influence and gained spiritual authority in territories that other people prefer not to deal with, especially in Western Europe, where people call themselves "post-Christian" and are very resistant to the Word of God.

One person dependent on the Holy Spirit is the "majority" in any given place or time. I can testify to that over and over again in my own life, and have encountered many others who can testify to this truth as well.

© by JOHN MULINDE and MARK DANIEL

ESTABLISHING A FAMILY ALTAR

An extract from "PRAYER ALTARS" by John Mulinde and Mark Daniel

Chapter 15: Pages 247-263

A family altar is established when the people in the home come together to seek, draw, and worship the presence of God so He can tangibly affect and change the atmosphere in their home. Their family becomes more God-centered, and the presence of God begins to affect their relationships and the things they do in the home. It even protects the home from the forces of darkness that desire to attack the people who live there.

When we started the family altars in Uganda, we saw many breakthroughs come into our nation. God was telling us that, "Every Christian home should be a prayer altar." How much more powerful would the effect of such a large number of Christians be if all the families came before God every evening and/or every morning and called on the name of the Living God on behalf of themselves and their communities? There would be chaos in the kingdom of darkness!

What Does the Family Altar Look Like?

The family altar is different for every family and even in different cultures across the world. However, every family.-Altar has some components that are similar: a time for reading the Word; a time to worship, hallow the name of the Lord, and minister to the Lord; and a time to go to Him in prayer.

The family may read the Word together for 20 or 30 minutes, perhaps taking turns reading the chapters. They then worship God as He was revealed to them through the Scriptures, hallowing His name and exalting Him. They sing praises to Him and lift up His name, inviting His presence into their home. As they worship Him and spend time seeking Him, the atmosphere in the house begins to change; the presence of God is drawing near. They may intercede for their family's needs, following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Many families spend about an hour together at the altar. Some families have an altar once a week, some have an altar every day, and others have their altar two or three times a week. No matter how frequently a family has an altar, the main idea is to establish an atmosphere in the home where the tangible presence of God is touching every area of life in the home. God's presence is affecting the conversations and attitudes, helping resolve conflicts, and changing the way family members relate to one another. It affects the family's values, mindsets, and how they spend their time.

The presence of God can be seen tangibly touching other people as they visit the home, no matter whether they are extended family members or friends of the family. The whole family begins to see that the presence of God is changing the way they live, talk, and think, and it will provide a protection to the family members from the darkness that is desiring to come in.

Many families report children confessing things they used to hide. They are finding that their communications have become clearer, their hearts have become softer and more open, and the ways they choose to entertain themselves or spend their money have changed.

The altar is not just having a time where we have prayer, read the Bible, and worship, it is a time where we are seeking as a family to come before the Lord and draw His presence. Allow the members of your family to have various roles. For example, selecting the music, choosing the Scriptures, or taking turns reading.

Even if some members of your family do not want to come to the altar, don't give up. Maintain the time and keep the altar going. The altar does not just impact those sitting in the room while it is going on. Because the presence of God is being drawn into the house, the atmosphere is changing, so even if other family members are not participating, the presence of God in your home will minister to them, working on their hearts and stirring their spirits.

The Marriage Altar

The marriage altar is a very powerful foundation for a strong and godly family.

The unbelieving spouse. If your spouse is not a believer and will not join you in your altar, stand by faith on his or her behalf, praying the needs of your

marriage before the Lord. Prophetically proclaim that you will both serve God and will fulfil the redemptive purpose God has for the two of you as one. Also proclaim prophetically that your marriage will be a shining example to many others whom God has allowed to be around you, both at home and in your community, church, or workplaces.

Bring your spouse's weaknesses and strengths before the Lord and prophesy the godly changes you desire to see in your spouse. Also ask the Lord to continually reveal ways you may be pushing your spouse away and not reflecting a Christ-like nature.

The Believing Couple. As a couple, you may desire to have an altar with just you and your spouse. If you do, ensure that you have a designated time and place for your time of prayer where you can share various issues and challenges that you may not be able to bring to the wider setting of the family altar.

At the marriage altar you can.

- Pray for the salvation of your spouse.
- Pray for deliverance from various bondages and wrong soul ties.
- Bring repentance for generational bondages that are present in your families as a first step of removing legal ground from the enemy. Remember that you do not have legal authority to carry out spiritual warfare over your spouse's generational bondages; they have to be broken by your spouse or by a blood relative (Exodus 20:5, Leviticus 26:40-42).
 - Bring repentance for the weaknesses and failings of your spouse and yourself.
 - Bring repentance for the failings in your relationship before God.
 - Bring repentance for any breakdown in relating to your relatives and friends on both sides of the relationship.
 - Ask for the desires of your heart concerning your relationship with your spouse and children or other relatives.
 - Ask for unity of purpose in your marriage and in both your families.
 - Present your petitions for your own and your children's future and redemptive purpose.
 - Call forth the giftings, calling, destiny, and godly character in yourselves and your children and families.

- Contend with forces of darkness that want to bring confusion in your relationships, business, and ministry.
- Get spiritual nourishment, refreshment, and rejuvenation of the love you have for your spouse.

Children and the Family Altar

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it," Proverbs 22:6.

God wants us to fellowship and pray corporately as a family. Your children are the pastors, prophets, and presidents of tomorrow. They are the ministers, national and spiritual leaders, and policy-makers of the future.

Many people ask us what to do with their children when they are having their family altar. We encourage you to let everyone in the family come to the altar. It is fine if the younger children sleep at the altar; they are being raised up in the presence of God, in a family that is seeking God; The children may sometimes play with a small toy or disturb you a bit during the family altar; do not let that be a hindrance. The devil wants to get those children when they are small, so make sure you also get them for God when they are very, very young. As time goes on month, after month and year after year, they will put away their toys and join the family in prayer.

Teach your children the Word of God and His promises. Teach them to repent and to ask God to not let judgment come upon their nation. Also ask them to pray always that all the children in their nation would grow strong in the Lord. They may not understand exactly what you are saying; nevertheless, let them cry out and ask, "God, please send your Holy Spirit to our home. Send the Holy Spirit to our city and cover our nation with the Blood of Jesus Christ." You will be surprised how much children can receive from the Holy Spirit and how much they can see hi the Spirit.

When the Lord spoke to us in Uganda when we cried out under the scourge of AIDS, He said, "Stop praying about problems and pray for My purposes. Fill the land with prayer. Teach My people to seek My presence. Don't do it in churches only. Teach people to take prayer back home and raise prayer altars at home."

"Bring your children to the family altar. Stop praying sugar-coated prayers with your children when you lay, them in bed and then come to Me and bare yourself in private saying, 'God I need Your help.' Come with your children before Me. Let them hear you cry before Me and plead your case before Me. Let them see you express your trust and confidence in Me. When you are frustrated and have no hope, let them see that frustration. Don't act strong before the children and lay them in bed with a one-minute prayer, then come and break down before Me. Let them see you before Me."

God went on and said to us, "When you are not there and circumstances become overwhelming for them, when they are being tempted to turn away from Me and are discouraged, fearful, or anxious, they will remember how much their parents depended on Me and how faithful I proved to be."

It is not useful for your child to come to you and say, "Mom, I have a desperate need," and you cover them with a short prayer, send them on their way, and then break down in desperate prayer, saying, "God, You know how broke I am. You know I have no means. I am desperate. I need help." You may spend hours interceding until breakthrough happens and you come out in faith knowing He will be faithful to bring your petitions to pass. When you come home the next day, somehow God has intervened and filled that need for your child. But they will never know - how much God helped you unless you model your life of prayer. When they hear you cry until your spirit touches the heart of God and see the travailing that takes place, then they will know that it is not an instant thing.

Don't let your prayers with your children stop with petitioning or with expressing desires and needs; let them also include seeking the presence of God. Every time you pray and worship, staying before the Lord and pressing in, not only looking for answers but for the God who gives answers, when His presence comes into the prayer room you know a breakthrough has happened, and your children will learn about the Living God and approaching His throne of grace.

In Jeremiah 9:20-21, God asked Jeremiah to call out the wailing women who were to teach their children to wail and stay the destruction and judgment that were coming to the land.

Let your children learn how to woo the presence of God. Take them with you to the altar and let them learn the sweetness of His presence, the aroma of His presence, and how to tread softly in His presence so that in their own time,

when you are not there, they will hunger after God's presence and not settle for less.

When they think they have done everything enjoyable, they will come home and yearn for that sweet aroma of God. Nothing else will satisfy them. No drugs or sexual immorality — nothing the world offers them — will quench their deep yearning for the real presence of God. All this is done at the family altar.

When the family altar is strong, it will have an influence over the family for generations to come. Just as Jacob, who lied to his father, usurped his brother's inheritance, and had no fear of God, was eventually called back by the altar that Abraham had raised more than 100 years before, your children, too, will be called back to the family altar you build. A strong family altar will call the children back to order. When you have trained up your children in the way of the Lord, and you see them go astray, go back and tap into the power of your family altar.

Practical Elements of Establishing a Family Prayer Altar

Start With Anyone Who Will Join You. Starting the altar with everyone in the family is difficult for many because not everyone in the home wants to participate. Many people have started a prayer altar by first confessing, "We have not been doing this as a family. We didn't even know we needed to do this. I want to repent before you and ask for your forgiveness because I have not helped raised up this family the way I need to."

Some people try to legislate the altar, forcing people to attend. This creates a bad spiritual atmosphere because some people will come in with a hard heart and will be shut down to the others at the altar. It is better to start a family altar in repentance and humility.

If you start an altar and only one or two people in your family want to join you, do not be discouraged. Even if no one in your family starts the altar with you, if you humbly continue to go before the Lord, worshiping Him, reading His Word, and even repenting for how your family has not made room for God, the atmosphere in your home will begin to change. Start with anyone who is willing, then keep the altar going. The others will be drawn in over time.

In many homes, one person started the family altar. Within a period of time, one person would join, then another, and then another. Before long,

because the atmosphere was changing in that home, the majority of the family, if not all of them, were coming to the altar.

Spiritually Prepare for Establishing a Family Altar. The first thing to do when building a family altar is to prepare. Before you even take the idea to the others in your family, pray and seek the Lord, repenting for anything that God shows you. You may even consider having a time of fasting to seek the Lord before you make this proposal to your family.

As you pray, God will show you a good way to present this to your family members. Come to them with a humble heart, knowing that you may have slow beginnings. Share with your family that yours is a Christian home and that you want the presence of God to dwell there with you. You want an altar to the Lord established in your home so it is filled with His presence.

Set a Time and a Place. As you go through the spiritual preparation, you may want to set a time and place in your home when most people can be present. Even if everyone cannot be there at that time or some family members attend inconsistently, you have the altar at the time you set and keep it going.

Begin by worshiping God and reading the Scriptures. Do this with an attitude of truly seeking God, not putting on a show for the people in your family. Just come to the altar time with the attitude that you are approaching the Lord on behalf of your family, seeking to draw His presence into your home. You desire His presence to be felt all throughout the house; you are inviting Him in and welcoming Him into that place. Come with an attitude of humility and love. Let there be no judgment, anger, or haughty spirit; let there only be an attitude of love.

Do not grow weary when you start your family altar. Not many people will want to join you at first. However, God is faithful; persevere, do not give up or shrink back, and believe Him for the victory.

Warfare. As with any altar, there is going to be warfare. The enemy is going to try to oppose your altar. Don't be discouraged. One form of opposition comes from family members who refuse to take part in the altar, as we've already discussed. Keep the altar going because you know it will have impact. Even hearing the others pray and worship as they sit in their room will touch their hearts.

We heard of a husband who had not wanted to come to the altar, but because his wife and children were worshipping God, the altar began to minister to him, even to the point where he broke down in tears in the other room. Another man with a mental illness would not attend the family altar, but his wife and two children continued to have the altar day after day. The altar began to stabilize the man's mental abilities and his whole personality began to change.

Don't underestimate the power of the presence of God. Don't underestimate what God's presence is doing in your home. Even when you see family members rebelling against the altar, do not focus on them; keep your eyes fixed on the Lord and trust that He is our Redeemer, our Salvation, and our ever-present Help.

When the atmosphere in the home comes under attack, or there is conflict, fear, or financial challenges in the family, take these to the altar. Saturate in the Word, worship God, draw deep into His presence as a family, and then take the battles before the Lord and watch Him break through.

Many families have been amazed as they brought their issues to God at the family altar and watched Him provide miraculous solutions, change circumstances, and bring breakthroughs. As they saw God move, even the children began to experience how real and tangible God is.

You might experience times when you sense the family altar is getting weaker. When this happens, seek the Lord for insight, asking, "God, what is hindering Your presence from coming? From moving in our home?" He may show you that you need to strengthen your personal altar. Or He may want to take your family altar to a new level. There may be things in your family that God wants to address; if this is so, humble yourselves and seek God. He will show these to you and you will see Him cleanse the house of darkness and take your family into a deeper reality of His presence.

One of the greatest types of warfare that will come against the family altar involves schedules. Even if your family has developed a good rhythm of altar times, something may come up that will tempt you to change the schedule. Don't let this discourage you. Keep the schedule going even if one member can't come as regularly as they had before. Be determined to keep your rhythm going, and begin to pray; maybe the Lord will lead you to add another altar time that your family member will be able to attend.

There may be times you are required to make an adjustment in your altar time; this change may make it possible for everyone to take part in the altar. Whatever the case, don't allow the altar to be taken away. The enemy loves to come and steal that time; we must contend for it.

Testimonies of Family Prayer Altars

Choosing which testimonies to share about family altars is very difficult because we have literally heard hundreds, even thousands of testimonies of families that have changed because they started building an altar together. People in nations known for prayer, but who weren't having a family altar, heard the testimonies coming out of nations that were beginning to do this, and it would inspire them to begin to build family altars. In Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world, thousands and thousands of family members and neighbors have come to Christ because of a family altar.

In all the nations where we have shared about establishing altars and drawing the presence of God — creating a spiritual atmosphere in which He will work — as families have established altars, they have found their children being drawn back to God. In the Far East, we have heard amazing testimonies of people getting saved as Christians started prayer altars in their homes. This started happening in every home that had an altar. Buddhists would come to their homes and give their lives to Christ. People would come to visit and begin to confess their sin, their needs, and their struggles, and the Christians would have an opportunity to lead them to Christ. As they drew the presence of God, even when in-laws and extended family came to visit their homes, God would begin to work on their hearts and they would have opportunities to lead their family members to Christ.

In Taiwan, there are numerous testimonies of family members who had rejected Christ for decades coming to Christ within a few months of a family building an altar in their home and drawing the presence of God. People with mental illnesses, in major rebellion, or even in adultery have been saved as an altar was built that began to break the darkness in their family. Many children's lives, more than we can count, were ignited for God because of their family altar. In fact, many young people were indifferent toward God even though they and their families went to church, but when they saw their parents seeking after God and coming together to draw God's presence in their home, to read the Word of

God, and to praise Him, those children began to change, catch fire, and pursue God.

One testimony of the power of the family prayer altar is from the Far East and involves a married woman with two children:

The woman's husband had a mental illness that caused him to be very erratic in his behavior. Many times he had thrown things out of the house and destroyed them. The woman was a schoolteacher; sometimes as she prepared her work during the night, he would destroy all the work she had prepared for the next day. He caused a lot of disruption in the house.

This woman said that in many ways it was worse than being a single parent because not only did she have to take care of everything herself, she was the only one in the home earning money, raising the children, and keeping up the house. She also had to cope with her husband. Because of his mental illness, he caused so many disruptions that she felt like someone was constantly working against her.

Their family was in a very bad situation. There was a lot of pain and woundedness. There seemed to be no way for the circumstance to change, and medication was not helping the situation. The woman was desperate for help.

She began to hear the testimonies of prayer altars. She didn't even think there was hope of starting one in her home because her children were young, about 8 and 10 years old. She wondered if the prayers of a few people could really change such a home situation. But the more she heard the testimonies of the prayer altars, which were spreading across her nation, the more she was compelled to start one in her home. The woman and her children began reading the Word of God together, and then they began to pray and invite Him into their home so His presence would come and change the atmosphere around them.

Many times when you ask God to draw near, He starts to show you things that grieve Him and hinder His presence from coming. The woman began to see a lot of bitterness, resentments, and wounds she had in her heart toward her husband. She brought her heart issues to the altar of the Lord, allowing Him to cleanse and heal all those things in her heart. There were times at the altar when she would just weep and weep,

and her children would be watching her as she was going before the Lord. God was healing and cleansing, and even allowing the children to receive some healing and cleansing.

As this continued, the atmosphere in the home started to change. Within a short period of time, the woman noticed that her husband was becoming much less disruptive and not doing as many things to cause damage to the family. They continued their altar; they continued to read the Word, worship, and pray, and they experienced God coming and meeting with them, dealing with their hearts and giving them a way to move forward.

As they walked out what the Lord showed them, God's presence worked more and more on the husband's life. He started to join the family more, contributing to the family life and their well-being. He even began to attend church, which he had never been willing to do before.

As the family continued to build their altar, God began to change them. The husband became calm, the mental illness began to stabilize, and he started to contribute and give himself to his family. Within a period of time, this man had become active in the church; he even joined a small group. You could see Christ moulding, shaping, and changing his life. The family came to have a completely different atmosphere in their home.

One of the amazing things about this family is that as their testimony was shared by video across the nation, many other people who had battles with depression, anxiety and other mental disorders in their families started to believe that if they built a family altar, there would be nothing too difficult for God to deal with in their families also.

The family altar is a powerful witness of what can happen when a family comes together to seek the Lord. Below are testimonies of the impact the family altar has had in the lives of a few families.

One testimony of a family prayer altar is from a married couple in the UK:

Neither of these people had ever had a personal altar. They also never had a time when they came together in prayer as a family. At one of our meetings in the UK, they heard the Lord say, "Surrender your lives to Me and I will show you what I can do with them." They decided to

commit before God and each other that they were going to get up early each morning, read the Scriptures together, then begin to worship the Lord. They would get up and spend an hour reading the Bible alone, just saturating in the Word of God. Then they would begin to praise the Lord together and share some of the Scriptures they had just read.

They said that at first it felt awkward to praise God. They were not accustomed to doing that even individually, let alone with someone else. But they continued to praise the Lord together, and the more they read the Bible, the more praise started welling up inside of them. The more the reality of who God was in Scripture began to grow deeper and deeper in their own hearts, the more praise they began to have.

After a few weeks, they lost some of their self-consciousness and worrying about how they sounded or how the praise was coming out. Their time became more and more about God. Within 3 to 4 weeks, they started experiencing their prayers beginning to push something. They said, "It was like there was a covering over us and over our house. The more we prayed, the more we started to feel it giving way until one day, we felt something tear and open up over us."

The presence of God came rushing in. They said, "We just started crying and worshiping Him and just releasing our hearts in abandonment and surrender to Him. And as we experienced that opening up over our house, our time with the Lord grew stronger and stronger. There were many times when we could feel sense that darkness was trying to shut us down, to put that covering back on. We just kept coming to the altar, day after day, week after week, saturating in the Word, and worshiping God. When one of us was struggling the other just kept on going, and vice versa. The Lord was teaching us how to fight to see that opening stay there."

"There are many times that God took us into intercession. He had us crying out for our nation and crying out for His purposes, things we never even knew how to do. He even led us into spiritual warfare. We had never even been trained in those things, but God taught us how to do this as we spent time at the altar. He equipped us to fight for His purposes and has given us a heart for our nation, which we never had before. We now believe for revival because we have experienced it in our own hearts and lives."

Another testimony is from Cleveland, Ohio:

Four young men living in a house together in the inner city wanted to see whether drawing the presence of God to their home would change the atmosphere of the neighborhood they lived in. Their desire was to not just affect their home, but also to affect the street they lived on. They lived on a street where drugs were sold. There was even a crack house on their street. The police were often called to their neighborhood because of domestic violence. Many young people were uncared for and living rebellious, destructive lives.

These four young men decided to start a family altar. They would get up early in the morning to spend an hour reading the Word of God together before they left for work for the day. When they came home from work, they would eat dinner, read the Word a little bit more, and then begin to worship and praise God. They did this day after day. They had a morning time and an evening time each day. They began to see the presence of God coming, and their hearts became more abandoned and surrendered to the Lord.

Within about a month, young people began to be drawn to the house. One or two young boys would come near the house as they were having their evening time of worship and praising God. Then these young people began to be drawn closer to the house and came to stand on the porch. Before long, the young men in the house went out to ask the boys on their porch, "Why are you here?" They were being drawn by the presence of God. They realized that the boys were being drawn because God's presence was coming to the house.

Before long, more young people were drawn to their home. They started having cookouts in their back yard, where they led many young people to Christ. Twelve to 15 young people started coming to their house to join their altar, all because the presence of God was being drawn.

The young men's faith increased. They continued getting up in the morning to saturate in the Word of God for an hour, then came home in the evenings and praised, worshiped, and glorified God for an hour or more. They declared God's purposes as His presence started moving in their home, and they started seeing God's heart. They started crying out

for their street and then seeing God's will and His desire for the people there.

Before long, the drug dealers abandoned the drug house and it closed down. No more drugs were being sold on the street. The family that called the police all the time for domestic violence began asking the young guys to give them counsel on how to deal with their relational conflicts and difficulty. (And none of them were married!) They began to see domestic violence in their neighborhood decrease.

And all these young men began to catch fire for God. They were bold to evangelize, witness, and testify on their street. They even shared with others how to build prayer altars in their homes. They realized that as they were seeking to draw God's presence to their home, their family altar had impacted a whole street in their inner-city urban neighborhood.

In Uganda, there are many testimonies of families drawing the presence of God at their altar. Their home would-be so filled with God's presence that people who lived near the house would be drawn to the home. As those people were drawn to that house, they experienced the presence of God, and then confess their sin, ask for prayer, or even ask how to be saved.

There are stories of children in the homes waking up in the middle of the night and worshipping God because His presence was so strong there. God's presence would cleanse the house of deception and darkness, and the children's lives would begin to be oriented around God. They were being raised in God's presence instead of in the culture or the darkness of the world, and their hearts would be bent toward God instead of toward the world.

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