

KNEELING IN PRAYER: OLD FASHION?

This study tries to respond to the following question: There is any position recommended by God for our private worship and when we worship in the house of God?

We should have a non-stop connection with our Lord through prayer, no matter where we are, no matter what we do: “There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. . . . In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God, and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes.” (Steps to Christ, p. 99)

“The reason why so many are left to themselves in places of temptation is that they do not set the Lord always before them. When we permit our **communion with God** to be broken, our defense is departed from us. Not all your good purposes and good intentions will enable you to withstand evil. **You must be men and women of prayer. Your petitions must not be faint, occasional, and fitful, but earnest, persevering, and constant. It is not always necessary to bow upon your knees in order to pray. Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor. Let the heart be continually uplifted in silent petition for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. Let every breath be a prayer.**”

As workers for God we must reach men where they are, surrounded with darkness, sunken in vice, and stained with corruption. But while we stay our minds upon Him who is our sun and our shield, the evil that surrounds us will not bring one stain upon our garments. As we work to save the souls that are ready to perish, we shall not be put to shame if we make God our trust. Christ in the heart, Christ in the life, this is our safety. The atmosphere of His presence will fill the soul with abhorrence of all that is evil. Our spirit may be so identified with His that in thought and aim we shall be one with Him.” (The Ministry of Healing, pages 509-511)

It is common sense to acknowledge that while we walk or while we work we don't need to kneel for prayer, as we can see in the quote above. But in our private worship at home and in the house of God there are many counsels which are not known and practiced by us today. We hear many saying that it doesn't matter the position you adopt for prayer. What really matters is your heart. But is it so? When Moses met Yahweh he was told: “**put off thy shoes from off thy feet**, for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy ground.” Ex. 3:5 If we were in Moses' place, could we dare to say “*But Lord, my heart*

is OK, does it really matter what I do with my shoes?" We could say it but we can imagine the consequences. Again, when Moses neglected the circumcision of his son, and we could say that it was just a form, just an exterior sign, "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him." Ex 4:24 Very strange and tough words for our ears. Moses and Zipporah thought like us maybe that an exterior sign shouldn't be more important for God than our hearts. They were consecrated people. They feared God. But they still had to circumcise their son. Full obedience God required of them and of us. Where there is no divine counsel about forms, we can have our personal understanding and preferences maybe, if we are in harmony with the Scriptures. But if for some forms we do have an It is written, like for baptis, our personal ideas and innovations should be abandoned. Otherwise we could find ourselves in the position of offering a strange fire, not the fire of God's kindling.

Mărturia Bibliei

Geneza 17:3 „And Abram **fell on his face**: and God talked with him, saying, ”

Geneza 24:52 „And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, **bowing himself** to the earth. ”

Exod 12:27 „That ye shall say, It [is] the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. **And the people bowed the head and worshipped.** ”

Exod 34:6,8 „And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed,... **And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.** ”

Iosua 5:14 „And he said, Nay; but [as] captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. **And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship**, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? ”

1 Regi 18:42 „So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And **Elijah** went up to the top of Carmel; and **he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees...**”

1 Regi 8:54 „And it was [so], that when Solomon had made an **end of praying** all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, **he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.** .”

2 Cronici 29:29 „And when they had made an end of offering, **the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped.** ”

2 Cronici 6:13 „For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and **kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven** ”

Ezra 9:5 „And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, **I fell upon my knees**, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God...”

Psalmi 95:6 „O come, **let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.** ”

Isaia 45:23 „I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That **unto me every knee shall bow**, every tongue shall swear.”

Daniel 6:10 „Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, **he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed**, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”

Daniel 10:10 „And, behold, an hand touched me, which **set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.** ”

Matei 6:5 „And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as **the hypocrites** are: for **they love to pray standing** in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. ”

Marcu 1:40 „And there came **a leper** to him, beseeching him, and **kneeling down to him**, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. ”

Luca 18:11 „**The Pharisee stood and prayed** thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.”

Fapte 9:40 „But **Peter** put them all forth, and **kneeled down, and prayed**; and turning [him] to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.”

Fapte 20:36 „And when he had thus spoken, he [**Paul**] **kneeled down, and prayed with them all.** ”

Fapte 21:5 „And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till [we were] out of the city: and **we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.**”

Efeseni 3:14 „For this cause I **bow my knees unto the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, ”

Filipeni 2:10 „That at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth”

Apocalipsa 5:14 „And the four beasts said, Amen. **And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever**”

Apocalipsa 7:11 „And all the angels stood round about the throne, and [about] the elders and the four beasts, and **fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God** ”

Apocalipsa 11:16 „And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, **fell upon their faces, and worshipped God** ”

Apocalipsa 19:4 „And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts **fell down and worshipped God** that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. ”

Our Attitude in Prayer

I have received letters questioning me in regard to the proper attitude to be taken by a person offering prayer to the Sovereign of the universe. Where have our brethren obtained the idea that they should stand upon their feet when praying to God? One who has been educated for about five years in Battle Creek was asked to lead in prayer before Sister White should speak to the people. But as I beheld him standing upright upon his feet while his lips were about to open in prayer to God, my soul was stirred within me to give him an open rebuke. Calling him by name, I said, **"Get down upon your knees." This is the proper position always.**

"And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed." Luke 22:41.

"Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up." Acts 9:40.

"They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:59, 60.

"When he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." Acts 20:36.

"When we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed." Acts 21:5.

"At the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." Ezra 9:5, 6.

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker." Ps. 95:6.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 3:14. And this whole chapter will, if the heart is receptive, be as precious a lesson as we can learn.

To Bow Down

To bow down when in prayer to God is the proper attitude to occupy. This act of worship was required of the three Hebrew captives in Babylon. . . . But such an act was homage to be rendered to God alone--the Sovereign of the world, the Ruler of the universe; and these three Hebrews refused to give such honor to any idol, even though composed of pure gold. In doing so, they would, to all intents and purposes, be bowing to the king of Babylon. Refusing to do as the king had commanded, they suffered the penalty, and were cast into the burning fiery furnace. But Christ came in person and walked with them through the fire, and they received no harm.

Both in public and private worship it is our duty to bow down upon our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him. This act shows our dependence upon God.

A Growing Laxness

I present these proof texts with the inquiry, "Where did Brother ----- obtain his education?"--At Battle Creek. **Is it possible that with all the light that God has given to His people on the subject of reverence, that ministers, principals, and teachers in our schools, by precept and example teach young men to stand erect in devotion as did the Pharisees?** Shall we look upon this as significant of their self-sufficiency and self-importance? Are these traits to become conspicuous?

"And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Mark you **it was the self-righteous Pharisee who was not in a position of humility and reverence before God; but standing in his haughty self-sufficiency,** he told the Lord all his good deeds. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself"; and his prayer reached no higher than himself.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

We hope that our brethren will not manifest less reverence and awe as they approach the only true and living God than the heathen manifest for their idol deities, or these people will be our judges in the day of final decision. I would speak to all who occupy the place of teachers in our schools. Men and women, do not dishonor God by your irreverence and pomposity. **Do not stand up in your Phariseism and offer your prayers to God.** Mistrust your own strength. Depend not in it; but **often bow down on your knees before God, and worship Him.**

A Token of Complete Subjection

And when you assemble to worship God, be sure and **bow your knees before Him. Let this act testify** that the whole soul, body, and spirit are in subjection to the Spirit of truth. Who have searched the Word closely for examples and direction in this respect? Whom can we trust as teachers in our schools in America and foreign countries? After years of study shall students return to their own country with perverted ideas of the **respect and honor and reverence** that should be given to God, and who feel under no obligation to honor the men of gray hairs, the men of experience, the chosen servants of God who have been connected with the work of God through almost all the years of their life? I advise all who attend the schools in America or in any other place, do not catch the spirit of irreverence. Be sure you understand for yourself what kind of education you need that you may educate others to obtain a fitness of character, that will stand the test that is soon to be brought upon all who live upon the earth. Keep company with the soundest Christians. Choose not the pretentious instructors or pupils, but those who show the deepest piety, those who have a spirit of intelligence in the things of God.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." This is the only safe knowledge that students can obtain. The light reading of the Scriptures makes my heart ache. Whilst I am writing I groan in spirit as I see how superficial is the understanding of the Scriptures. There is an abundance of profession of Christianity, but very little practice. Jesus says, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Who will prove themselves wise virgins? Who the foolish virgins who have no oil in their vessels with their lamps? Shall it be as represented--half wise, and half foolish?

On Bended Knee

We are living in perilous times. Seventh-day Adventists are professedly the commandment-keeping people of God; but they are losing their devotional spirit. This **spirit of reverence** for God teaches men how to approach their Maker--with sacredness and awe through faith, not in themselves, but in a Mediator. Thus man is kept fast, under whatever circumstances he is placed. **Man must come on bended knee, as a subject of grace, a suppliant at the footstool of mercy.** And as he receives daily mercies at the hand of God, he is ever to cherish gratitude in his heart, and give expression to it in the words of thanksgiving and praise for these unmerited favors. Angels have been guarding his pathway through all his life, and many of the snares he has been delivered from he has not seen. And for this guardianship and watchcare by eyes that never slumber and never sleep, he is to recognize in every prayer the service of God for him.

All should lean upon God in their helplessness and daily necessity. They should keep humble, watchful, and prayerful. Praise and thanksgiving should flow forth in gratitude and sincere love for God.” (Notebook Leaflets, vol.1, p.119-122)

“The prayer offered by Solomon during the dedication of the temple, was not made while he stood upon his feet. **The king knelt in the humble position of a petitioner.**

Herein is a lesson for God's people today. Our spiritual strength and our influence are not increased by conformity to **a worldly attitude during prayer. . . . Let man come on bended knee**, as a subject of grace, a suppliant at the footstool of mercy. Thus he is to testify that the whole soul, body, and spirit are in subjection to his Creator (RH Nov. 30, 1905)

The Temple and Its Dedication

"In the midst of the court" of the temple had been erected "a brazen scaffold," or platform, "five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high." Upon this Solomon stood and with uplifted hands blessed the vast multitude before him. "And all the congregation of Israel stood." 2 Chronicles 6:13,3.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," Solomon exclaimed, "who hath with His hands fulfilled that which He spake with His mouth to my father David, saying, . . . I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name might be there." Verses 4-6.

Solomon then **knelt** upon the platform, and in the hearing of all the people offered the dedicatory prayer. Lifting his hands toward heaven, while the congregation were bowed with their faces to the ground, the king pleaded: "Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and showest mercy unto Thy servants, that walk before Thee with all their heart."...

The humility of Solomon at the time he began to bear the burdens of state, when he acknowledged before God, "I am but a little child" (1 Kings 3:7), his marked love of God, his **profound reverence** for things divine, his **distrust of self**, and his **exaltation of the infinite Creator of all--all these traits of character**, so worthy of emulation, **were revealed** during the services connected with the completion of the temple, **when during his dedicatory prayer he knelt in the humble position of a petitioner.** Christ's followers today should guard against the tendency to lose the spirit of reverence and godly fear. The Scriptures teach men how they should approach their Maker--with humility and awe, through faith in a divine Mediator. The psalmist has declared:

"The Lord is a great God,
And a great King above all gods. . . .
O come, let us worship and bow down:
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

Psalm 95:3-6.

Both in public and in private worship it is our privilege to bow on our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him. Jesus, our example, "kneeled down, and prayed." Luke 22:41. Of his disciples it is recorded that they, too, "kneeled down, and prayed." Acts 9:40. Paul declared, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 3:14. In confessing before God the sins of Israel, Ezra knelt. See Ezra 9:5. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God." Daniel 6:10.

True reverence for God is inspired by **a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence**. With this sense of the Unseen, every heart should be deeply impressed. The hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there. And as reverence is manifested in attitude and demeanor, the feeling that inspires it will be deepened. "Holy and reverend is His name," the psalmist declares. Psalm 111:9. Angels, when they speak that name, veil their faces. With what reverence, then, should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!" (Prophets and Kings, p.40, 48)

"The Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and was revealed in the words that were given me to speak. I asked those present who felt the urgency of the Spirit of God, and who were willing to pledge themselves to live the truth and to teach the truth to others, and to work for their salvation, to make it manifest by rising to their feet. I was surprised to see the whole congregation rise. **I then asked all to kneel down, and I sent up my petition to heaven for that people**. I was deeply impressed by this experience. I felt the deep moving of the Spirit of God upon me, and I know that the Lord gave me a special message for His people at this time." (The Review and Herald, March 11, 1909)

"His request was finally granted. In the presence of his judges, **Jerome kneeled down and prayed** that the divine Spirit might control his thoughts and words, that he might speak nothing contrary to the truth or unworthy of his Master. To him that day was fulfilled the promise of God to the first disciples: "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake. . . . But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:18-20. {GC 112.3}

The words of Jerome excited astonishment and admiration, even in his enemies. For a whole year he had been immured in a dungeon, unable to read or even to see, in great physical suffering and mental anxiety. Yet his arguments were presented with as much clearness and power as if he had had undisturbed

opportunity for study. He pointed his hearers to the long line of holy men who had been condemned by unjust judges. In almost every generation have been those who, while seeking to elevate the people of their time, have been reproached and cast out, but who in later times have been shown to be deserving of honor. Christ Himself was condemned as a malefactor at an unrighteous tribunal.” (GC 112)

“For the first time the child Jesus looked upon the temple. He saw the white-robed priests performing their solemn ministry. He beheld the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. With the worshipers **He bowed in prayer**, while the cloud of incense ascended before God. He witnessed the impressive rites of the paschal service. Day by day He saw their meaning more clearly. Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour.” (DA 78)

“When **the minister** enters, it should be with dignified, solemn mien. He should bow down in **silent prayer** as soon as he steps into the pulpit, and earnestly ask help of God. What an impression this will make! There will be solemnity and awe upon the people. Their minister is communing with God; he is committing himself to God before he dares to stand before the people. Solemnity rests upon all, and angels of God are brought very near. **Every one of the congregation, also, who fears God should with bowed head unite in silent prayer with him** that God may grace the meeting with His presence and give power to His truth proclaimed from human lips. **When the meeting is opened by prayer, every knee should bow in the presence of the Holy One**, and every heart should ascend to God in silent devotion. The prayers of faithful worshipers will be heard, and the ministry of the word will prove effectual. The lifeless attitude of the worshipers in the house of God is one great reason why the ministry is not more productive of good. The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God's instrumentalities in the work of saving souls. **All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.**” (Testimonies for the Church, vol.5, p.492)

Exceptions

Crowded Congregation in Europe Remained Seated.-- “I invited those who desired the prayers of the servants of God to come forward. All who had been backslidden, all who wished to return to the Lord and seek Him diligently, could improve the opportunity. Several seats were quickly filled and **the whole congregation was on the move. We told them the best they could do was to be seated right where they were** and we would all seek the Lord together by confessing our sins, and the Lord had pledged His

word, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)".-- Diary, Feb. 20, 1887. (Published in Selected Messages, book 1, p. 147.)

Congregation Rises to Feet for Consecration Prayer. "I invited all who wanted to give themselves to God in a sacred covenant, and to serve Him with their whole hearts, to rise to their feet. **The house was full**, and nearly all rose. Quite a number not of our faith were present, and some of these arose. I presented them to the Lord in earnest prayer, and we know that we had the manifestation of the Spirit of God. We felt that a victory had indeed been gained.--Manuscript 30a, 1896. (Published in Selected Messages, book 1, p. 150.)

"On Sabbath, I spoke to the church in Chaux-de Fonds about one hour. The Spirit of the Lord was in our midst. The only hall the church could obtain in which to hold meetings, was like a private room. And if the windows were opened to obtain air, the atmosphere was loaded with the fumes of liquor casks and wine barrels; for directly across the narrow street was a manufactory of liquors. And the noise of hammering and pounding and clatter would not permit one to hear. **The room was so packed that it was impossible to kneel down, so all stood while prayer was offered.**

It is impossible for me to express the inconvenience experienced in worshiping God in such a place. **Here were more than sixty persons assembled in a place so small that they could not find room to kneel**, and the impossibility of securing proper ventilation made the atmosphere anything but healthful. I felt compelled twice, as I was speaking, to change the exercise, and have all arise and engage in singing; for a sleepy lethargy seemed to be upon the people, who were compelled to work hard during the week. The windows were thrown open as often as practicable, but the strong fumes of fermented wine were most offensive to the senses of those who were temperate. I spoke again on Sabbath, and then there was a social meeting." (RH, September 27, 1887 par. 7-8)

THAT ELLEN WHITE DID NOT INTEND TO TEACH THAT ON EVERY PRAYER OCCASION WE MUST KNEEL IS MADE CLEAR BOTH BY HER WORDS AND HER EXAMPLE. TO HER THERE WAS NO TIME OR PLACE WHERE PRAYER WAS NOT APPROPRIATE. HER FAMILY TESTIFIED THAT IN HER HOME THOSE AT THE DINING TABLE BOWED THEIR HEADS AND NOT THEIR KNEES. SHE WAS NOT KNOWN TO KNEEL FOR THE BENEDICTION AT THE CLOSE OF SERVICES SHE ATTENDED. **THE EARNEST COUNSEL ON KNEELING WOULD SEEM TO HAVE ITS PRINCIPAL APPLICATION IN THE WORSHIP SERVICES IN THE HOUSE OF GOD AND IN FAMILY AND PRIVATE DEVOTIONS AT HOME.** IN PUBLIC MINISTRY THERE WERE TIMES WHEN SHE STOOD FOR PRAYER.--COMPILERS.] 3SM 269

In the following pictures you can see people who don't have the light we have. Still, their attitude is one of deep reverence when they worship. The cup has to be clean both inside and outside. We shouldn't try to neglect our hearts while we focus on exterior attitude in our worship. But when the cleaning is started inside, the outside will be also clean, in harmony with God's counsel.



