



# BUILDING PRAYER ALTARS

TIMOTHY JAMES GIBSON

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*“Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.”*

*1 Kings 18:30*

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Building Prayer Altars (2016)

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## PREFACE

*This booklet is based on the book “Prayer Altars” by John Mulinde and Mark Daniel, published by World Trumpet Mission Publishing, Orlando, FL, USA. It is my summary of the teachings and lessons in that book plus additional insights we have been learning in our church as we take this journey together. I have also used significant parts of the “Prayer Altar” booklet developed by Pastor Doctor Lew Lee Choo of SIB KL to whom I am eternally grateful. The purpose of this booklet is to provide a basic understanding of what it means to build prayer altars in the Singaporean context.*

*There’s no one right way of “doing prayer altars” but there are principles and suggestions presented here that work and are based firmly in Scripture. This booklet helps to answer some of the common questions such as “what is a prayer altar?” and “How does a prayer altar differ from my normal time of prayer?”*

*I humbly submit these chapters in the hope that they help in answering your questions and help you build strong and effective prayer altars here in Singapore that will transform you, this nation and launch Singapore into its destiny as an Antioch of Asia.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	05
Part 1: Why Prayer Altars? .....	07
Part 2: Prayer Altars Vs Prayer Meetings .....	17
Part 3: What are Prayer Altars? .....	23
Part 4: Prayer Altar Strategy .....	29
Part 5: Pushing Back the Darkness .....	39
Part 6: Ushering in the Presence of God .....	47
Part 7: The Prayer Altar Lifestyle .....	53
Summary .....	66

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he building of prayer altars is not a program. It is a necessity for Christians and for Christian communities to live victoriously and in the purposes of God. This booklet aims to help you on your journey of understanding what they truly are so that you will build them to be strong and effective.

The purpose of this booklet is to show the Biblical basis of prayer altars and how they differ from ordinary prayer times. It outlines the importance and power of prayer altars and how they fit into God's strategy of pushing back the Kingdom of Darkness and ushering in the Kingdom of Light. This booklet shows that the prayer altar is a lifestyle and not just a time and place and it reveals how the prayer altar transforms people and places. In a nutshell it aims to give practical help and understanding on how to live the prayer altar lifestyle in your life, your family, your church, your school, your workplace and your nation.

The purpose for us in Singapore is about building altars of prayer where we have a deep walk with God and our spirits are transformed from fear to faith, from being lukewarm to burning with passionate love and from being people of convenience to people of commitment. We'll be revived so that our sacrifices keep the altar burning day and night and, as we offer ourselves on that altar, it ignites the fire of God within us and we become that pillar of fire that carries Him into our homes, our communities, our nation and into the nations. It is this fire that will drive out the darkness in our land and usher in His Kingdom.

This booklet will help you see the need to build prayer altars all over Singapore so that the:

1. **Priority in our lives** is to walk in His ways, wisdom and will.
2. **Presence** of God pushes away the darkness.
3. **People's lives** (Family, church and marketplace) are transformed.
4. **Pattern of our lives** and churches will be Jesus.
5. **Prayer lifestyles** are Effective, Engaging and Empowering.
6. **Prevailing priesthood** of the church will have authority over the society and land in Singapore.
7. **Prophetic destiny** of Singapore as an Antioch of Asia will be fulfilled.

A black and white photograph of a bonfire. The fire is bright and intense, with flames rising high into the dark night sky. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a person is visible, looking towards the fire. The overall scene is dramatic and atmospheric.

**PART 1**

**WHY PRAYER  
ALTARS?**

The words “*prayer altar*” can be understood from meaning a dry, stone monument in a cold and dead church, to a real place of connecting with a god or with our ancestors where we make offerings and prayers.

However, we need to realize that the prayer altar originated with God Himself and, though it has been abused and misunderstood, it still has a proper place in Christian life today.

Because of the misuse of altars in the past many Christians feel the altar is an Old Testament relic that has no place in our lives today and so has been replaced by largely ineffective times of prayer, whether individual or corporate.

As we shall see, prayer altars are the BEST way as they are...

**Biblical**  
**Engaging**  
**Strategic**  
**Transforming**

### **Prayer Altars Are Biblical**

The word ‘*altar*’ occurs 402 times in the Old Testament and 23 times in the New Testament and means “*place of slaughter*”. As the Bible is God’s inspired Word to us (2 Timothy 3:16) we need to look and see what relevance it ascribes to the altar for us as New Testament Christians. Just because there are counterfeit altars today it does not mean that we have to throw out the real thing!

The following chart shows the history of the altar through the Bible...



### Point One: The Garden of Eden

The Garden of Eden is the first place where God dwells with man and is, as such, the first temple, possibly with walls around it and a gate in the east with guarding Cherubim (Genesis 3:24). It is in the garden that God first spoke destiny over Adam and Eve as we see in Genesis 1:27-28:

*<sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

When God created man and put him in the Garden of Eden, He gave him dominion over the earth and its resources. But the

entry of sin changed all that. The devil deceived mankind into surrendering our God given legal rights of the earth to him. The devil has no legal rights over the earth so he must get it by deception.

When sin entered the world, man was banished from the presence of God and only allowed back through sacrifice. Indeed, God initiated altar sacrifice by slaying an animal to clothe Adam and Eve after they sinned (Genesis 3:21) so they could be accepted back into His presence and purposes.

### **Point Two: Altars of the Godly line**

Adam and Eve would have taught their children to build altars to God to enter once again into His presence. However, only Abel offered a blood sacrifice as shown by God and was accepted back into His presence and purposes. Cain offered the fruit of a cursed ground, the work of His own hands and was rejected, hence showing us the difference between true and false altars.

After this we see the building of true prayer altars through the Godly line from Enosh where “*men began to call on the name of the Lord*” (Genesis 4:26) until Noah (Genesis 8:20). This then continued from the time of Abraham until Jacob where they built altars to God and walked in His ways (Gen 35:11-15).

## **Points Three to Five: Moses' Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple**

*“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.”* Exodus 25:8

From Moses onwards God showed the blueprint of His Temple, His dwelling place that His people could enter through sacrifice to be a house of *“prayer for all nations”* (Isaiah 56:7). It was the place where the manifest presence of God would come (Leviticus 9:23-24; 2 Chronicles 7:1).

### **Point Six: Jesus and the Cross**

Jesus Himself came as the fulfillment (a rabbinical term meaning *“correct interpretation”*) of the Old Testament Law (Matthew 5:17) including the Ceremonial Law concerning the Temple (John 2:21) and the Cross became the ultimate altar of sacrifice for the sins of mankind (Hebrews 13:10) with Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice (John 1:29). This made the way for us to come back into the presence of God, only through Christ (Romans 5:1-2).

By Christ's death and resurrection Satan's plans to deny us of both our rights and our access to God was defeated at Calvary. Through the blood of Christ, we have been reconciled to God, have gained the legal right to stand before Him and have an open heaven (Ephesians 2:13). We have been given all authority to wage warfare against spiritual forces of darkness over our land so as to bring souls into His Kingdom (Ephesians 6:11-12).

*“<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Matthew 28:18-19

The basis of our prayers is the finished work of Christ on the Cross, the ultimate altar...

*“**We have an altar** from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.”* Hebrews 13:10.

### **Point Seven: Christians are the Temple of the Holy Spirit**

*“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?”* 1 Corinthians 6:19

The early Christians, after Pentecost, lived the altar lifestyle (Acts 2:46) and so should we. Altar language continues throughout the New Testament, showing we now have a spiritual altar not a physical one, offering up spiritual sacrifices (Hebrew 13:10-16). Indeed, if our body is the temple then our heart is the altar where we must daily apply the ultimate altar, the Cross, as Jesus said in Luke 9:23.

*Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross daily**, and follow Me.”*

So, as we have seen from Scripture, prayer altars continue now as a spiritual fulfillment of the physical pattern given in the Old Testament. Indeed, the Old Testament Temple is a “*copy and shadow of the heavenly*” one (Hebrews 8:5) and so all Old Testament references to altars are useful in giving us spiritual principles and patterns for prayer altars today.

### **Prayer Altars Are Engaging**

Often our prayer times can become dry and sluggish, but true prayer altars engage us so that the time flies past and we are filled with great excitement. Prayer altars include set times with God in a set place (Daniel had three such times a day coinciding with the times of the morning, noon and evening Temple Sacrifices – Daniel 6:10) but also carries over into every aspect of our lives 24/7.

Prayer altars are simple on paper but require much more commitment and sacrifice than other types of prayer. Prayer altars engage us in God’s presence, seeking His face and not His hand, through deep times of soaking in His Word, deep hallowing of His name, deep repentance and consecration and deep intercession, spiritual warfare and declaration. These times can last much longer than normal prayer times but will seem to finish in no time at all as they engage us deeply in meaningful and fulfilling times of prayer.

## **Prayer Altars Are Strategic**

Raising prayer altars is the enactment on earth of what Christ has gained for us in the heavenly realms. It is claiming back our legal right to carry on God's original plan for every nation to come into their prophetic destiny (Acts 17:26). Prayer altars ensures our part in this destiny.

Prayer altars bring all the elements of spiritual disciplines together under God's big purpose and brings us to the place of being part of God's united network in our nation and the nations. This network's purpose is to push back the darkness and possess people and places for His Kingdom. It connects us together with others building prayer altars and plugs us, all with our own gifts and callings, into the bigger picture of what God is doing in our nation and beyond.

Prayer altars form spiritual gateways through which heaven comes to earth, His Kingdom comes, His will is done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10).

## **Prayer Altars Are Transforming**

True prayer altars bring transformation to people and places, lives and lands.

They transform our lives so that we become more passionate and hungry for God's presence as we hallow His name, more holy as we repent and consecrate our lives and more compassionate for others as we identify with them in repentance and intercession.

Through the prayer altar lifestyle, we bear more spiritual fruit, enter more into our personal calling and destiny and become more active and effective for His Kingdom and not ours.

Prayer altars also transform the places and lands we live in by transforming the atmosphere to be full of God's presence (joy, peace etc.). This leads to many more people coming to the Lord and brings the land (family, church, school, workplace, nation) into God's destiny and purposes.

*“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and **heal their land.**” 2 Chronicles 7:14*

Personal prayer altars transform our life.

Family prayer altars transform our families.

Church prayer altars transform our Church.

Marketplace prayer altars transform our workplace.

National prayer altars transform our nation.

That's why prayer altars are the BEST!

They are...

**Biblical**

**Engaging**

**Strategic**

**Transforming**

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*When Jesus taught His disciples to pray He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*

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