

Back to the Altar — The Cadence of Life

DAY 3 — MORNING AND EVENING

“Stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening” (1 Chronicles 23:30).

Life with God

A reading of 1 Chronicles 23 reveals that God commanded the Levites—those who cared for the ancient Jewish temple and its services—to stand in His presence, lifting their voices in thanksgiving and praise to Him every morning and every evening. This devotional exercise originated in another imperative that God gave Moses when He asked the Israelites to “make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). God further enjoined, “One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight” (Exodus 29:39).

Life in Between

Israelite life was meant to be lived between two daily, foundational spiritual experiences. God’s people were to begin and end each day with Him. They were never to take His saving grace for granted. They needed God’s power to protect them from outward threats as they traversed a hostile wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. They needed to be guarded against temptations from within—the desire to practice Egyptian values and Egyptian spirituality and Egyptian attitudes learned in captivity. The morning and evening sacrifices were God’s way of laying down a devotional pattern for Israelite individuals and families to follow, a way of keeping them in right relationship with Him. Here is how Ellen White describes this sacred, solemn, daily experience:

“As the priests morning and evening entered the holy place at the time of incense, the daily sacrifice was ready to be offered upon the altar in the court without. This was a time of intense interest to the worshipers who assembled at the tabernacle. Before entering into the presence of God through the ministration of the priest, they were to engage in earnest searching of heart and confession of sin. They united in silent prayer, with their faces toward the holy place. Thus their petitions ascended with the cloud of incense, while faith laid hold upon the merits of the promised Savior prefigured by the atoning sacrifice. The hours appointed for the morning and the evening sacrifice were regarded as sacred, and they came to be observed as the set time for worship throughout the Jewish nation. And when in later times the Jews were scattered as captives in distant lands, they still at the appointed hour turned their faces toward Jerusalem and offered up their petitions to the God of Israel. In this custom Christians have an example for morning and evening prayer. While God condemns a mere round of ceremonies, without the spirit of worship, He looks with great pleasure upon those who love Him, bowing morning and evening to seek pardon for sins committed and to present their requests for needed blessings.” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 353, 354)

If your devotional life has lost its cadence, ask God now to renew your commitment to morning and evening worship today.

Let’s talk to our God.

Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)**Praying God's Word — 1 Chronicles 23:30**

"Stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening."

"Every Morning"

Jesus, we want to start our days with You. Please do wake us up so we may enjoy communion in Your presence. Help us to make this a daily habit and not to rush it or put it off. Help us to make You truly first and foremost in our thoughts each and every day. Amen.

"Thank and Praise the Lord"

Father, we are quick to bring before You our various requests, complaints, and wishes, sometimes forgetting that You are a Person, not a vending machine. Remind us of all the aspects of Your character, all the small and big things You have done and are doing for us, so we can thank and praise You for them. Right now, bring to our minds reasons to praise You. Amen.

"Likewise at Evening"

God, we not only desire to start our day with You but to end it with You also. As we reflect upon the hours You gave us, may You bring to our minds the many times we have seen Your faithfulness throughout the day. Let us fall asleep with praise on our lips, for You are our everlasting Savior. Amen.

More Prayer Suggestions

Thanks and Praise: Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

Confession: Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

Guidance: Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

Our Church: Pray for regional and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

Local Requests: Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

Listen and Respond: Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

Song Suggestions

SDA Hymnal: Father, Lead Me Day by Day (#482); I Surrender All (#309); Draw Me Nearer (#306)

Other Songs: Whisper a Prayer; Open My Eyes, Lord