

☞ Principles of Praise series

Review Purpose of Praise... we were created to proclaim God's praises; praise is the proper protocol for entering God's presence; it pleases God when we praise; and we receive personal benefit when we praise.

☞ The Practices of Praise

--Erwin W. Lutzer... *You don't learn to praise in a day, especially since you may have been complaining for years! New habits take time to develop. But you can begin today, and practice tomorrow, and the next day, until it becomes part of you.*

☞ When should we praise God?

James 5:13 says *we should praise when we are happy.*

Psalm 42:5 says *we should praise him when we are not happy.*

Psalm 34:1 says *His praise will always be on my lips.*

☞ **Anytime & all the time!** Notice, the scripture never says, "when the song moves me," or "when it's my favorite song."

☞ Where should we praise God?

Psalm 22:22 says *in the congregation.*

Psalm 57:9 says *among the nations.*

Psalm 107:32 says *in the council of the elders.*

Psalm 148:1 says *in the heights above.*

Psalm 150:1 says *in his sanctuary and in his heavens.*

☞ Suffice it to say, we should praise God pretty much **everywhere**. But note how most of these references are public places and with others.

☞ How should we praise God?

☞ Psalm 86:12 says *I will praise you... with all my heart.*

☞ Psalm 4 says to **be silent.****

☞ Psalm 26:7 says **out loud.**

☞ Psalm 9:11 says to **sing.**

☞ Psalm 98:4 says to **make a joyful noise.**

☞ Psalm 95:1-7 mentions **shouting****, **thanksgiving**, **music**, & **kneeling**.

- ☞ Psalm 46:10 says to **be still**.
- ☞ Psalms 47:1 says to **clap your hands** and shout**.
- ☞ Psalm 150 includes **musical instruments and dancing**.
- ☞ Psalm 134:2 mentions **with lifted hands**.

To me, this is one of the easiest ones... you might not be a singer or a musician; maybe you can't keep rhythm to clap; and dancing is way out of the comfort zone for many... but lifting hands? Unless you're injured or disabled, that's easy!

☞ **Tim Hawkins video... Raising Hands**

That video is not intended as a mockery, but rather as a way to lighten the atmosphere and relax about these things. The truth is, when we are praising and worshiping our focus should be on the Lord, not on each other anyway. But don't use that as an excuse to do nothing at all. Lifting hands is very biblical and nearly everyone can do it.

Reasons why I raise my hands during worship by Nate Beaird

A while ago my wife, Niki, and I were sitting with a group of friends from church, all from various church backgrounds. A question was raised by one of our group: "I've been meaning to ask you guys, Why do some people lift their hands during the songs?" It's a fair question.

There are some very theological and even historical reasons why people raise their hands. In the Psalms, David writes about lifting hands to the Lord's holy sanctuary and as an offering. The act of lifting hands towards someone is also described as a blessing, as a form of worship, and as a form of surrender. There are many reasons why raising a hand is significant even apart from worship.

Reaching for help. *Have you ever pushed someone into a pool? What was their first reaction? Probably hands flailing, grasping for something, anything that would protect them from their current experience. We don't think about what we are doing; it is hard-wired into our being to reach out for help. Sometimes life throws me a surprise push into the pool, and in the middle of my experience I reach out for the Lord.*

Excitement. *Have you ever cheered your favorite team on to a last minute victory? I know some can get very wound up in that situation. Sometimes during worship, I simply want to praise God, not only for winning but also ensuring that I will win through his Son, Jesus Christ.*

Sadness. *We have all needed a hug at some point in our lives. There is something about that connection with a loved one that comforts us because we get the sense that we don't have to be strong and hold it together in that moment. I've been so crushed that only reaching out to the Lord would do, and in that moment, I understood He cared for me.*

Hey you! Sometimes I feel like God is looking at a sea of faces, and I need Him to see me. Sometimes I raise my hands as if to say, “Hey, I’m right here and I need you!”

Surrender. Raising your hands in surrender can mean you are cornered and out of options. In my life I’ve done a pretty great job at getting cornered, running out of options. When I run my life my own way, it always happens. It’s not that I’m completely clueless about how to live and make decisions; it’s just that I’m making decisions and choices without all the information. God, on the other hand always has all the information, so sometimes when I raise my hands during worship, I’m surrendering my life back to Him.

I know the answer. We all knew what to do in school when we knew the answer: we raised our hands and the teacher would call on us. I don’t always know how to find the “x” in an equation, but here’s something I do know: the Lord is for me and not against me. Sometimes when I’m worshipping, I want to raise my hands to Him and praise Him because the answer is so sure in my Spirit.

I will go. I want to volunteer for the Lord’s service. Sometimes when I worship, I raise my hands as if to say, “I’ll go, Lord. Send me. Use my gifts and resources to do whatever you need to do.”

Receiving. Sometimes when I worship, I am asking for more. I’m asking God to show me and my family His glory, to touch us with His Spirit. I’m asking for healing, for wisdom, for direction, for forgiveness.

I’ve noticed that every one of my reasons for raising my hands during worship revolves around relationships. Our context with God is – wait for it – a relationship. Thus we can draw parallels in how we extend our hands in other relationships in our daily lives to reasons we raise our hands during worship. Worship is more than just reading words on a screen and singing three fast songs and then three slow songs. It’s a time to connect with Him. The next time someone asks me why I raise my hands during worship I know what I will say: I simply want to connect.

There are many ways to praise the Lord. The original language of the Old Testament gives us a variety of methods for praising. Sometimes when our Bibles simply say “praise the Lord,” there is depth of meaning in the original language that we miss. In fact, in the Hebrew language there are at least 7 words for praise, and each of them has a slightly different implication...

☞ **Zamar** is found in Psalm 21:13 and means **to play an instrument**.

☞ **Halal** is found in Psalm 22:22 and means **to celebrate**.

☞ **Tehillah** is found in Psalm 22:25 and means **public adoration and thanksgiving**.

☞ **Towdah** is found in Psalm 26:7 and means **to give thanks beforehand**.

☞ **Barak** is found in Psalm 26:12 and means **to kneel**.

☞ **Yadah** is found in Psalm 57:9 and means **to hold out the hand**.

☞ **Shabach** is found in Psalm 117:1 and means **to be loud & boast**.

There are various expressions of praise. It starts from the inside and works its way out to effect the whole body from time to time.

There is no ranking of better or worse in these forms of praise. These are simply different ways to praise. Many places in the world (like Africa) wouldn't really consider it praise if there wasn't some shouting and dancing. On the other hand, Quakers highly esteem total silence. These are neither right nor wrong; they're simply preferences. So, there are many ways to praise the Lord. However, I think it is proper to express our praise in a variety of ways. And, it's okay to stretch yourself a bit and learn to praise in some new ways.

☞ **We should praise God all the time, everywhere and in a variety of ways.**

☞ **Psalm 86:12** - we should join the psalmist and say ***I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.***

Let's practice...

What are some things you're thankful for?

What impresses you most about God?

Great are you Lord

-or-

Here for You