

# A House of Prayer For All Nations: The Church's Eternal Identity

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## 1. Introduction

- a. Man (both male and female) was created to exalt God and enjoy Him forever in loving intimate relationship. We see this truth in the very beginning when Adam and Eve were placed within the Garden of Eden.
- b. They were not, as some suppose, the first gardeners or farmers on the earth but the first priests, created to minister to God.
- c. This call to priesthood (one whose primary purpose is the minister to God) is one that can be traced throughout the entire biblical storyline.
  - i. Beginning with Adam and Eve, through Noah, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; then shifting to the nation of Israel as a whole up through the New Testament Church, we see God calling His people to be priests.
  - ii. The reason for this is quite simple, we were originally created to function this way and this is what God primarily wants from us. We, as humans, are the only creatures ever created with the capacity to see God and respond in loving worship.

*"To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and **has made us kings and priests to His God and Father**, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." – Revelation 1:5-6*

*"But you are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, **that you may proclaim the praises of Him** who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..." - 1 Peter 2:9*

- d. Every individual has been created to function as a priest that ministers to God as their primary calling in life. People are constantly looking for their "calling" or their "destiny" but the Bible makes it very clear, your original purpose was to minister to the Lord out of intimate knowledge and love.

## 2. A House of Prayer For All Nations

- a. Individually we are all priests who minister before the Lord. When we step into our priestly identity collectively, as a church, community or city, we take on the communal identity of a house of prayer.
  - i. Biblically speaking PHOP alone is not the house of prayer of Mankato. The whole worshipping church of the city is God's house of prayer.
  - ii. When God looks down at the house of prayer in our city and region God sees the whole church that is worshipping, loving, and obeying Him with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength.

- b. The term house of prayer comes from two portions of Scripture, Isaiah 56 and Matthew 21 (in which Jesus is quoting Isaiah).

*“And He said to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer...”” - Matthew 21:13*

*“And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant— these I will bring to my holy mountain and **give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.**” - Isaiah 56:6-7*

- c. God’s house speaks of a number of realities:
  - i. God’s family - we are in loving relationship and fellowship with God.
  - ii. God’s resources - we have access to all of God’s resources including things like favor, blessing, finances, grace, power, authority, etc.
  - iii. God’s inheritance - we are joint heirs with Christ that will be rewarded and blessed forever in Christ.
- d. All of these realities are released in and through our identity as priests before the Lord. Therefore we can rightly say that all of these realities are realised, established, and experienced through prayer and worship.
- e. When God names someone (i.e. Abraham or Israel) the name speaks about that person’s identity and function on the earth. Therefore to be named a “House of Prayer” by God tells our communal identity and purpose on the earth is to be rooted in prayer and worship.
- f. To be a house of prayer then is simply to say that God’s people in a particular time and place are operating collectively as priests before the Lord through prayer to see His resources and power released on the earth.
  - i. The interaction of prayer is very simple. I like how Mike Bickle puts it:

*“God speaks and it moves our heart. Then we speak and it moves His heart.” - Mike Bickle*

- ii. This is true on an individual level. But when we join together collectively this reality increases exponentially. It is one thing for an individual to pray as a priest before God, but it is something entirely different when the church of a city begins to pray and worship with focus together as a house of prayer.

*“Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.” - Leviticus 26:8*

- g. This is how Jesus desires the church to function and operate, as a house of prayer. Corporate prayer and worship should be at the epicenter of everything the church

does. All of our evangelism was meant to flow out of our being a house of prayer. Acts 13 is the best example of this.

*“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers...**As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, **being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went to Seleucia...**” - Acts 13:1-4***

- h. When we begin to understand and purposefully operate in our shared identity as a house of prayer God’s resources, justice, power and light are released over a city and region. Partnership in prayer is always how God releases His resources into the earth.
  - i. This again is true both individually and corporately. When I partner with God in prayer individually His kingdom is released. But when we as a house of prayer partner with Christ in prayer together God’s kingdom power and authority is realised at even greater dimensions.
  - i. The prayer room then should be seen as the governmental center of the universe. When you and I take our place together in prayer we are standing before the very Throne of God with His full attention and His full treasury of resources ready to be released.

*“The Lord is in His holy temple, **the Lord’s throne is in heaven;** His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.” - Psalms 11:4*

*“God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.” - Psalms 47:8*

- j. Hebrews tells us that it is to this throne that we approach with confidence when we enter into prayer. And it is from this place that God rules and reigns from.
  - i. Additionally we see in Scripture that Christ not only rules from heaven but He Himself rules through prayer. The Father speaks and it moves the Son’s heart and then the Son speaks and it moves the Father’s heart and He in turn releases the Spirit upon the earth to answer the prayer of the Son.

*“**I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.’” - Psalms 2:7-8***

*“The Lord said to my Lord, **‘Sit at my right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’** The Lord shall send out the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauty of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The Lord has sworn and will not relent, **‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” - Psalms 110:1-4***

### 3. Our Eternal Identity

- a. Individually we are priests who minister to God (Revelation 1:4-5). Corporately we are a kingdom of priests who minister together as God's house of prayer (Isaiah 56:6-7). Each of these are patterned after Jesus own identity as an intercessor before the throne of God (Psalms 110:1-4).
- b. When we partner with Christ, the great intercessor, in prayer we take on our family identity as a house of prayer by which we release God's rule and reign in the earth by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- c. This is how the church was always meant to operate here on the earth. God's rules the nations in conjunction with His people through intimate intercession. His kingdom is released when we speak God's word back to Him in lovely partnership.
- d. Our identity and function as a house of prayer does not end in this age however. We will forever be called and operate as a house of prayer for all nations. When everything else passes away we will still be ministering to the Lord and partnering with His heart to rule and reign with Him on the earth.

*"Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. **For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.**" - 1 Corinthians 13:8-12*

- e. Loving intimate relationship will always be the primary way we relate to the Lord, both now and forever.
- f. The bible describes the global church operating as a house of prayer at the end of the age.

**"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" - Rev. 22:17**

**"Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them! Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice... and declare His praise in the coastlands. The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man (Second Coming of Jesus); He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies." - Is 42:10-13**

*"And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, "Give me justice against my adversary.'" For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, "Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. **And will not***

**God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"** - Luke 18:1-8

- g. It will be global prayer room that will release the ultimate display of God's justice, love, and kingdom on the earth; the return of Jesus.
- h. Once this age has passed and that eternal age has come upon us our role as a house of prayer will not change. For all of eternity we will talk to God the Father, through God the Son, by God the Spirit in partnership with His plans for the earth.

*"And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."* - Revelation 5:10

*"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.** And He who sits on the the throne will dwell among them."* - Revelation 7:14-15

*"And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb..."* - Revelation 15:2-3

- i. For all of eternity we will be ruling and reigning with Christ as the global house of prayer. This is what Isaiah saw when he spoke those glorious words in chapter 56.
- j. There would be a day coming in this age that God would call all the nations of the earth to enter into intimate partnership with Him through prayer. This partnership would bring about the establishment of God's kingdom on the earth and forever the Bridegroom God would rule with His bride through intercession.
- k. For us then to feel God calling us into the place of corporate prayer and worship is to have Him drawing us into both our original purpose and our eternal destiny.