

Public Prayer

Should We Pray in Public?

- Matthew 6:5-8
 - Jesus condemns public prayers that are offered to be seen by men.
 - Jesus Himself prayed publicly. (John 6:11; 17:1)
- Early disciples practiced communal prayers.
 - Acts 4:23, 24, 31
- NT church was instructed about public prayers.
 - 1 Corinthians 14:13-19

Roles of Men in Public Prayer

- Men have been given a great privilege and honor: to lead God's people in prayer.
 - 1 Timothy 2:8
 - “Men” in v. 8 is gender specific (Gr. *aner*); refers to a male as opposed to all people or persons.
- Men, do we realize how special this is?
 - 1 Timothy 2:8
 - Leviticus 10:1-3

General Guidelines

- There is no magic formula for the perfect public prayer.
- However, all *public* prayers should:
 - Be offered with assurance and reverence.
 - Heb. 10:19-22; John 17:11, 25
 - Be genuine.
 - Matthew 6:7 and 1 Cor. 14:40 can harmonize.
 - Be considerate of the hearers.
 - 1 Corinthians 14:15-17

Suggestions for Improvements

- Speak loudly, speak clearly.
 - Hard to say amen if prayer cannot be heard.
 - Project your voice forward.
- Use words that can be understood.
 - Matthew 6:5
- Practice at home.
 - Good public prayers rarely originate there.
- Prepare!

Responsibilities of the Hearer

- Those in the audience have the responsibility of praying with the leader.
 - Don't allow your mind to drift (or nap).
 - Should be able to follow along and say “amen.”
 - 1 Corinthians 14:15, 16

General Observations

- Sitting, standing, or kneeling are all acceptable forms of approaching God in prayer.
 - The position of the heart, though, is vital.
- Neither bowing of the head or closing of the eyes are commanded.
 - John 17:1
 - Yet, it can prove difficult to concentrate when not doing this.

Conclusion

- Prayer is a privilege.
- Let's be known as a "house of prayer."
– Luke 19:45, 46