

July 4 Su (Optional) — Exodus 3:7-6 — Holy Ground

We recently read about how the construction of the temple emphasized the holiness of God. Worship-related items outside the temple building were made of bronze, whereas those inside the building were made of, or covered with, valuable gold. Inside the building was another level of holiness, represented by the Most Holy Place where God's presence was displayed over the ark of the covenant. Today, we read about an earlier time when God dramatically showed and stressed His holiness.

¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

God revealed Himself in a dramatic way to Moses through the burning bush. That it spontaneously burst into flame was attention-grabbing. But there was something even more surprising: the bush wasn't consumed by the flames. That brought Moses to even greater attention: "*I will turn aside to see ... why the bush is not burned*" (v. 3). The flames brought him toward the bush but the fact that it did not burn up drew him even closer. God called the place near the bush "*holy ground*" (v. 5) because it was near to God, just like the Most Holy Place was holy because it was near to God. Notice that "*the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush*" (v. 2) and then "*God called to him out of the bush*" (v. 4). Yahweh was in the flames. We need to remember that whenever phenomenal things happen to us that grab our attention, God could be calling to us through those unusual circumstances. So, watch and listen! You are on holy ground.

1 Kings 8

¹ Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. ² And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

³ And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴ And they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up.

⁵ And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

⁶ Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. ⁸ And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.

2 Chronicles 5

² Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. ³ And all the men of Israel assembled before the king at the feast that is in the seventh month.

⁴ And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. ⁵ And they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the Levitical priests brought them up.

⁶ And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

⁷ Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁸ The cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. ⁹ And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside. And they are^[fn] there to this day.

ESV Footnote

(5:9) Hebrew *it is*

1 Kings 8 (cont.)

⁹ *There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.* ¹⁰ *And when the priests came out of the Holy Place,*

a cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 5 (cont.)

¹⁰ *There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.*

¹¹ *And when the priests came out of the Holy Place*
(for all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, without regard to their divisions, ¹² and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters; ¹³ and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD,

*“For he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever,”*

the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, ¹⁴ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

Response to Praise — These passages, describing the dedication of Solomon’s temple, are nearly identical except for the additional section in 2 Chron. 5:11b-13a that emphasizes the consecration of the priests and the music sung and played by the Levites on that occasion. There is a stated cause and effect here: “*when the song was raised ... the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud*” (v. 13). That represented the presence of God. God responded to worship with His powerful presence. Jesus said that the time had come for “*true worshipers [to] worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him*” (John 4:23). God not only shows up when people worship Him but He is “*seeking such people.*” God doesn’t need worship but we need to worship. It points our hearts and minds toward that which is truly good and great and He floods our souls with the “cloud” of His presence. He responds to praise.

Meditation: Part of what they sang was, “*For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever*” (v. 13). This statement of praise is identical to the first verse of Ps. 136. In fact, the phrase, “*...for his steadfast love endures forever,*” appears at the end of each of the 26 verses of that psalm. It seems to be an antiphonal psalm—one in which the first half of each verse is sung by one group of people and the second half is sung by another group. Perhaps Ps. 136 was the complete song of praise sung at the temple dedication and 2 Chron. 5:13 quoted only the first verse of it.

1 Kings 8

¹² Then Solomon said, “The LORD^[fn] has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. ¹³ I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” ¹⁴ Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. ¹⁵ And he said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, ¹⁶ ‘Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there.

But I chose David to be over my people Israel.’ ¹⁷ Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁸ But the LORD said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’ ²⁰ Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹ And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

ESV Footnote

(8:12) Septuagint *The LORD has set the sun in the heavens, but*

2 Chronicles 6

¹ Then Solomon said, “The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. ² But I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” ³ Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. ⁴ And he said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, ⁵ ‘Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there, and I chose no man as prince over my people Israel; ⁶ but I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there, and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel.’ ⁷ Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁸ But the LORD said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. ⁹ Nevertheless, it is not you who shall build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’ ¹⁰ Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹¹ And there I have set the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with the people of Israel.”

From Mouth to Hand — The expression “hand-to-mouth” is defined as “having ... nothing to spare beyond basic necessities” (Merriam-Webster). It is a negative picture of constantly being in need. I was struck today by reading a rather opposite statement in 1 Kings 8:15 about God, “*who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David...*” Here, the order is mouth-to-hand; what was promised by God’s mouth was fulfilled by His hand. God promised David that his son would build his dreamed-for temple and Solomon reminded the people of that promise and fulfillment as the temple was dedicated. Are you living hand-to-mouth or mouth-to-hand? One concentrates on the need and the other on the supply. One is man-oriented and the other is God-

oriented. Yes, we may find ourselves in a needy situation from time to time but that might be a call to turn our eyes and hopes toward our ultimate divine supplier.

July 7 W Reading 134 — 1 Kings 8:22–30; 2 Chron. 6:12–21 — Solomon's prayer of consecration

1 Kings 8

²² *Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel*

and spread out his hands toward heaven,

²³ *and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart; ²⁴ you have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day.*

²⁵ *Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.' ²⁶ Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father.*

²⁷ *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! ²⁸ Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, ²⁹ that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. ³⁰ And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.*

2 Chronicles 6

¹² *Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands.*

¹³ *Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court, and he stood on it. Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel,*

and spread out his hands toward heaven,

¹⁴ *and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, ¹⁵ who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day.*

¹⁶ *Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.' ¹⁷ Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David.*

¹⁸ *"But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! ¹⁹ Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you, ²⁰ that your eyes may be open day and night toward this house, the place where you have promised to set your name, that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. ²¹ And listen to the pleas of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen from heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.*

Look and Listen — We will read Solomon's long prayer in several parts. I love the importance that the new king placed on prayer, having a large bronze platform built (2 Chron. 6:13) on which to offer this public prayer before the crowd of Israel's leaders. He prayed with humility and honor, kneeling down and stretching out his hands toward heaven (v. 13). The prayer first recognized God's faithfulness in keeping His promise to David in allowing his son to succeed him and build the temple (1 Kings 8:24). He then acknowledged God's infinite greatness, too great to be contained in a temple because He is everywhere present (v. 27). Only His "*name*" would be in the temple, which represented His presence (v. 29). Solomon's first request was for the Lord to look and listen, pointing His attention to the place of prayer and the prayerful pleas of the people (v. 29). God is always looking and listening for people who will pray to Him. In fact, He commands us to pray. Prayer turns our thoughts away from ourselves toward God and toward others and it draws upon God's power. The writer of Hebrews talks about prayer in a way that reflects the dramatic prayer that Solomon offered in front of the temple: "*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (Heb. 4:16). Please take a few minutes right now to pray in Jesus' name. Thank God for His faithfulness, His uncontainable greatness, and His loving desire to have you communicate with Him!

1 Kings 8

³¹ *"If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, ³² then hear in heaven and act and judge your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.*

³³ *"When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, ³⁴ then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers.*

³⁵ *"When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, ³⁶ then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.*

³⁷ *"If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them in the land at their gates,^[fn] whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, ³⁸ whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house, ³⁹ then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways (for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind), ⁴⁰ that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.*

ESV Footnote

(8:37) Septuagint, Syriac *in any of their cities*

2 Chronicles 6

²² *"If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, ²³ then hear from heaven and act and judge your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.*

²⁴ *"If your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and they turn again and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, ²⁵ then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to them and to their fathers.*

²⁶ *"When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, ²⁷ then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.*

²⁸ *"If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemies besiege them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, ²⁹ whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house, ³⁰ then hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind, ³¹ that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.*

House or Heaven? — We read earlier that Solomon said to God that he had built the temple as “a place for you to dwell in forever” (1 Kings 8:13), with God’s clarification, that only “my name might be there” (v. 16). In today’s reading, Solomon’s prayer recorded in Kings and Chronicles for potentially-sinners Israel is almost identical. It has seven parts; the last three we will read next time. In each part, Solomon mentions that the prayers of God’s people would be aimed at the physical “house” (temple) but that God would hear from “heaven.” The people seemed to need to be connected to something physical in their prayers to God. This suggests to me that no matter how limited we are in our prayers, God is ready and willing to listen to them. When we pray, it is hard to “picture” an infinite and invisible God. We also often have difficulty knowing what to pray about regarding a certain subject or how to say what we feel in our hearts. Paul also recognized this difficulty and gave us this instruction: “*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words*” (Rom. 8:26). We will just strive to do our best to focus our attention on Him in prayer, knowing that He is super-accepting of us.

July 9 F Reading 136 — 1 Kings 8:41–53; 2 Chron. 6:32–42 — Solomon's prayer for a sinning nation (2)

1 Kings 8

⁴¹ “*Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name’s sake* ⁴² (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, ⁴³ hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.

⁴⁴ “*If your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to the LORD toward the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, ⁴⁵ then hear in heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause.*

2 Chronicles 6

³² “*Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for the sake of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm, when he comes and prays toward this house, ³³ hear from heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.*

³⁴ “*If your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to you toward this city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, ³⁵ then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause.*

1 Kings 8 (cont.)

⁴⁶ *"If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, ⁴⁷ yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' ⁴⁸ if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, ⁴⁹ then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause ⁵⁰ and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them ⁵¹ (for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace). ⁵² Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant and to the plea of your people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to you. ⁵³ For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD."*

2 Chronicles 6 (cont.)

³⁶ *"If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near, ³⁷ yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' ³⁸ if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity to which they were carried captive, and pray toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, ³⁹ then hear from heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their pleas, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you.*

⁴⁰ *Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place.*

⁴¹ *"And now arise, O LORD God, and go to your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.
Let your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation,
and let your saints rejoice in your goodness.*
⁴² *O LORD God, do not turn away the face of your anointed one!
Remember your steadfast love for David your servant."*

Foreigners and Exiles — Solomon's prayer included foreigners who would apparently hear about the miracle of what God did in bringing Israel out of Egypt. (The expression that they heard of

“your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm” [1 Kings 8:42] was used in Deut. 5:15 to describe Israel’s release from Egypt.) The history of what God had done would be used in evangelism; foreigners would hear, come, and worship. Then, Solomon’s prayer prophetically looked ahead to a time when Israel would be forced to live in a foreign land as punishment for sin. If Israel would subsequently repent and return to God, they would be shown compassion by their captors (v. 50) and God would rescue them as He did for their forefathers in Egypt (vv. 51, 53). So, foreigners would be brought to God through hearing about God’s work in the past, and Israel would be given “a second exodus” from slavery in a foreign land. We were once “foreigners” who heard the message of God’s love and were drawn to salvation. We can be evangelists by telling our miraculous story to others. Some of us have also been exiled to a “foreign land” in discipline for our rebellious sin but were restored to fellowship with God when we humbled ourselves and returned to Him in repentance.

Meditation: At the end of Solomon’s prayer, 2 Chron. 6:41-42 inserts Psalm 132:8-10. Did these verses originate with Solomon or did he quote them from an already-existing psalm? It is certainly appropriate here at the temple dedication for him to invite God to *“go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might”* (2 Chron. 6:41). We will see the Lord dramatically respond to that invitation with His visible presence in 2 Chron. 7:1-3.

July 10 Sa (Optional) — Matthew 6:5-13 — Public Prayer

We just read about Solomon’s very public prayer while he was elevated on a specially-constructed platform in the temple area before hundreds of Israel’s leaders. That reminded me of Jesus’ instruction about prayer. Is there a contrast here? Was Solomon wrong in doing what he did?

⁵ *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”* ⁶ *But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

⁷ *“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.”* ⁸ *Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.* ⁹ *Pray then like this:*

*“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.*

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread,*
¹² *and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

We have many examples of Jesus’ practice of separating Himself from others in order to pray but He also prayed publicly. Before feeding the 5,000, He said a public blessing over the food (Matt. 14:19). In front of Lazarus’ tomb, He even prayed with the intended purpose that others could hear Him: *“Father, I thank you that you have heard me ... but I said this on account of the people standing around...”* (John 11:41-42). John 17 records Jesus’ long prayer in front of His 11

disciples. The key to this public-private question seems to be one of attitude. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because their prayers were intended to promote themselves before the people, whereas the content of Solomon's prayer shows that his heart was right before God and wanted to praise Him. So, whether we pray privately or publicly, let's make sure we do it genuinely.