

## Lifting Up Holy Hands in Prayer

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### Introduction: “Is the Practice of “Lifting Up Holy Hands In Prayer” Merely a “Pentecostal” Phenomenon?”

- A. Lifting up the hands during prayer (and even when singing) is common among Pentecostal or Assembly of God religious groups (not so with most denominations).
- B. Lifting up hands in prayer may appear strange, even “unorthodox” to those not accustomed to it.
- C. Is the practice of lifting up holy hands in prayer a *requirement* of God or merely an *optional* posture of prayer?
- D. Whether or not lifting up our hands in prayer has any *spiritual* value or benefit can only be determined from a study of God’s word.

### I. Examining the Context of 1 Timothy 2:8 - “Pray Lifting Up Holy Hands.”

- A. The subject of prayer is introduced in the beginning of the chapter (1 Tim. 2:1-2).
  - 1. We are exhorted by the apostle to pray for **all people** (“men” from anthropos - not gender specific) and for all in authority.
- B. Why Christians should pray for all people (1 Tim. 2:3-7).
  - 1. It is good (or excellent) and acceptable to God, well pleasing to the Lord!
  - 2. God desires their salvation and for them to come to the knowledge of the truth!
  - 3. God’s desire should be our desire too and such is reflected in our prayers.
- C. The subject of prayer is reintroduced (1 Tim. 2:8).

### II. Examining the Meaning of 1 Timothy 2:8.

- A. An instruction for men.
  - 1. “Men” is from the Greek word aner, specific to **men only**.
  - 2. Since all Christians must pray (1 Thes. 5:17), this must refer to men’s role to lead public prayer.
  - 3. Christian **men** have the responsibility to lead prayer in the public worship assembly (1 Tim. 2:8; cf. 1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 14:34).
  - 4. Women are not inferior to men (Gal. 3:28), but have a different role than men in the divine order of God (1 Cor. 11:2-3).
  - 5. It is the “**will**” of God (expressed through Paul) for all men to pray (1 Tim 2:8).
- B. “The men in every place” are to pray (1 Tim. 2:8).
  - 1. Every**place** (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2) Christians assemble for worship, men are to lead prayer.
  - 2. This refers to prayer in the **public assembly** because of the importance placed on not praying in anger and dissension (or discord or quarreling).
  - 3. Wherever prayer is done (e.g., Jerusalem, temple, church building, house), the right attitude of holiness must be evident (John 4:23-24).
- C. “**Lifting up** holy hands”
  - 1. The posture in prayer in which one’s attitude is expressed by the hands, lifted up toward the Lord God in heaven (1 Ki. 8:22; Ezra 9:5).

D. “**Holy hands**”

1. Holiness in heart and action (i.e., undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, pure).
2. Prayer with holy hands *requires* praying without “wrath”(i.e., anger, indignation, vengeance, violent emotion) or “dissension” (discord or quarreling).
3. Those who lead prayer must not pray angry words against a brother nor with ill will in his heart toward others (e.g., **Mat. 5:22-24, 44; 6:14-15**).

**III. What Spiritual Value May “Lifting Up Holy Hands In Prayer” Possibly Have?**

- A. It is an outward expression of our *praising or blessing* God (**Ps. 134:2; 63:4**).
- B. It is an expression of our *approval of God and reverence* toward Him (**Neh. 8:5-6**).
- C. It is an outward expression of our desire that our prayers would be *accepted or received by God* (**Ps. 141:2; cf. Rev. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 13:15-16**).
- D. It is an outward expression of our acknowledgment of our *dependency* on Him and the *serious attitude* we bring in the requests we make of God (**Lam. 2:19**).
- E. It is an outward expression of our *hearts devoted to God*; A symbol of elevated hearts toward God (**Lam. 3:41**).
- F. It may *possibly* aid us in keeping the right attitude of holiness as we pray (**1 Tim. 2:8**) which is critical to praying prayers that are acceptable to God (**1 Pet. 3:12**).

**IV. Lifting Up the Hands Is Only One of the Methods of Expression in Praying Unto God.**

- A. **Prostration:** Falling upon the knees, then gradually inclining the body, until the forehead touches the ground (an expression of reverence and humility before a superior) (e.g., **Gen. 17:3; Mat. 26:3; 1 Sam. 25:23; 2 Kings 4:37**).
- B. **Kneeling:** A common posture to show respect in worship (**1 Kings 8:54; Lk. 22:41**) (“sitting” possible form of kneeling - **2 Sam. 7:18**; not a common posture in the Bible).
- C. **Standing:** Erect or with a slightly bowed head. The *most* common posture in prayer to show respect or pay homage to God (e.g., **Gen. 18:22; Luke 18:11, 13**).
- D. **Kiss of Adoration:** The practice of kissing hands toward object of adoration (i.e., great affection) (e.g., Christ - **Ps 2:12**; king - **1 Sam 10:1**; heathen to idols **1 Ki 19:18**).
- E. **Lifting Up Holy Hands:** The posture in prayer in which one’s attitude is expressed by the hands (e.g., **1 Ki. 8:22; Ezra 9:5**).
- F. *What method a person chooses may depend on what is personally necessary and on his or her circumstances.*

**V. Whatever Posture In Prayer We Choose, Let Us Be Sure to Obey the Lord’s Command to Pray As We Should!**

- A. Christians are commanded to pray continually (**1 Thes. 5:17; Col. 4:2**).
- B. We should not ever neglect our duty to pray to God (**James 4:17; 2:10**).
- C. We should *always* pray according to God’s will (His word) (**1 John 5:14**).
- D. Whatever posture or method of expression in prayer that a person chooses should always be done in sincerity and truth (**John 4:23-24**).
- E. Christian men should step up to the duty of leading prayer in all holiness (**1 Tim. 2:8**).

**Conclusion: No Matter What Posture We Use in Prayer, Let Us Be Certain to Always Offer Prayers That Are Acceptable to God.**