

Speaking to the soul



Prayer and worship

**In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.
1 Timothy 2:8**

Lifting up hands in worship has happened for thousands of years. The psalmists often referred to it. In Psalm 63:4, King David proclaimed: “I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer.” However, by itself, lifting our hands in worship says nothing at all about what is happening in our hearts. A person could be living the most

immoral life and thrust their hands into the air. Paul wanted to know that those who worshipped God in this way were doing so in the right spirit – that their hands were holy, and that they weren't angry or stirring up controversy.

When we worship God, we must come in holiness. Our minds must be focused on God. It is so easy for us to come to worship with our minds distracted. For that reason, it is often very helpful to make sure we have a time of quietness before we worship God. In that time, we can deliberately lay down all the potential distractions so that we can place God at the centre of our thoughts.

It's also impossible to worship God if you're angry or in dispute with someone. You need to resolve the situation first and then worship God. However badly you have been wronged, you need to forgive the person who has hurt you, remembering Jesus' words that if we don't forgive other people then neither will God forgive us.

What Paul longed for was congregations of Christian people who were sincerely and joyfully focused on praying to God without any distraction. He knew that prayer was the powerhouse of any church – and it still is!

QUESTION

Do you find it helpful to raise your hands in prayer and worship?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you for the incredible privilege of prayer. Help me always to come to you in the right spirit. Amen
e prayer more seriously and to place it at the heart of my life. Amen

Photo - Co Antrim lighthouse

