

Psalms 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

Analysis

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. This verse specifies the timing and posture of David's prayer, emphasizing both the morning hour and David's expectant attitude. The emphatic repetition "in the morning... in the morning" stresses the importance of this practice—beginning the day with prayer isn't incidental but central to David's spiritual discipline.

"My voice shalt thou hear" (qoli tishma, קוֹלִי תִשְׁמָע) reverses the usual prayer pattern. Rather than "Hear my voice, O LORD," David declares with confidence, "My voice shalt thou hear." This isn't arrogance but assurance based on covenant relationship—David knows God hears His people's prayers. The certainty echoes 1 John 5:14-15: "if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us... we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

"In the morning" (boqer, בֹּקֶר) specifies dawn or early morning. Throughout Scripture, morning prayer appears as consistent pattern: Abraham rose "early in the morning" to stand before the Lord (Genesis 19:27); Moses rose early to meet God on Sinai (Exodus 34:4); Hannah prayed in the morning (1 Samuel 1:19); Job rose early to offer sacrifices for his children (Job 1:5). Morning prayer claims the day's first moments for God before distractions intrude, orienting the entire day toward Him.

"Will I direct my prayer" (e'erokh, אָעֲרֹךְ) uses a verb meaning to arrange, set in order, prepare, marshal. The root is used for arranging sacrifices on the altar (Leviticus 1:7), setting bread in order on the table (Exodus 40:23), and preparing troops for battle (1 Samuel 17:8). Prayer isn't haphazard but deliberate, ordered, purposeful. David marshals his petitions like a priest arranging sacrifices or a commander positioning troops. This suggests thoughtful, structured prayer rather than rambling improvisation.

"And will look up" (atzappeh, אֶצַּפֶּה) means to watch, look out, wait expectantly. The verb implies vigilant expectation, like a watchman on the wall scanning for approaching figures. David doesn't merely pray and move on—he waits expectantly for God's response. This reflects faith that God hears and will answer, combined with patience that doesn't demand immediate response. Habakkuk 2:1 captures this posture: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me." Prayer includes both petition and expectant waiting.

Historical Context

The practice of morning prayer aligned with the daily sacrificial system. Exodus 29:38-42 prescribes the continual burnt offering—one lamb offered in the morning, one in the evening. These daily sacrifices, accompanied by prayers, established rhythm for Israel's worship. The morning sacrifice symbolized offering the day to God; the evening sacrifice reflected gratitude for His provision and protection. Individual prayer synchronized with corporate temple worship, connecting personal devotion with communal ritual.

The metaphor of "directing" prayer like arranging sacrifices ties David's prayer life to his priestly role. Though not a Levitical priest, David as king functioned in priestly ways—offering sacrifices (2 Samuel 6:17-18), blessing the people (2 Samuel 6:18), and interceding for the nation. His ordered, sacrificial approach to prayer models how believers should approach God—not casually but with reverent preparation, not carelessly but with thoughtful arrangement of petitions and praise.

Jesus modeled this pattern of early morning prayer. Mark 1:35 records, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Before facing the demands and challenges of ministry, Jesus sought the Father in prayer. This pattern established spiritual foundation for the day's work. For Christians seeking to follow Christ's example, morning prayer isn't legalistic requirement but wisdom gleaned from Scripture's repeated testimony—those who seek God at day's beginning walk through the day with greater spiritual clarity, strength, and purpose.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does beginning the day with prayer differ practically and spiritually from praying primarily when needs or crises arise?
2. What does it mean to 'direct' (arrange, order) your prayers rather than approaching God haphazardly?
3. How can you cultivate the practice of 'looking up' expectantly after prayer rather than immediately moving to the next activity?
4. What obstacles prevent you from establishing consistent morning prayer, and what practical steps can overcome these?
5. How does Jesus' example of rising early to pray challenge or affirm your current prayer patterns?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	בֹּקֶר	תִּשְׁמַע	קוֹלִי	בֹּקֶר	אֶעֱדֹךָ
O LORD	in the morning	shalt thou hear	My voice	in the morning	will I direct
H3068	H1242	H8085	H6963	H1242	H6186
לְ	וְאֶצְפָּה:				
H0	my prayer unto thee and will look up				
	H6822				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:147 (Parallel theme): I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.

Psalms 88:13 (Prayer): But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

Mark 1:35 (Prayer): And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

Psalms 130:6 (References Lord): My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

Psalms 55:17 (Prayer): Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

Isaiah 26:9 (Parallel theme): With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Psalms 69:16 (References Lord): Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

Psalms 22:2 (Parallel theme): O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.