

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with grateful hearts, thankful for the opportunity to gather and learn from Your word. As we begin today, we ask for Your presence to be with us. Open our minds and hearts to receive Your teachings and help us to understand and apply them in our lives.

May we grow in faith, love, and understanding. Bless each person here and those joining us by way of the internet. And Lord, watch over those that are not here today.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

1 Chronicles 15:1-3

¹5 And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.

² Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.

³ And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it.

1 Chronicles 15:11-15

¹¹ And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab,

¹² And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.

¹³ For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁵ And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 15:25

²⁵ So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obbedom with joy.

1 Chronicles 16:1

So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God.

Romans 8:8-9

⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

GOD'S WAY FOR MOVING THE ARK

To have God's approval, we must do things God's way. The presence of God, of which the ark was a type, must be carried in the hearts of saints, not separated from them. The work of the church is to rest directly upon the saints of the church, not on a mechanical, human organization.

Just as David learned the importance of following God's specific instructions for moving the ark (1 Chronicles 15:13), we too must adhere to His guidance in our lives and ministries. When we align our actions with God's will, we invite His blessings and presence into our midst. The ark, symbolizing God's covenant and presence, reminds us that our faith and obedience are paramount.

In our journey, let us remember that God's way is always the best way. By carrying His presence within us and working together as a faith community, we can fulfill His purpose and experience the life-changing power of His love and forgiveness.

1 Chronicles 15:1-5 In the three months that the ark waited at Obededom's house, David searched the law of God and found the reason for the failure of the first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem. Now he was confident in his moves. Knowledge of God's law and direction on any work brings real confidence. **None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen** Levites were the priestly tribe set apart for the service of God about the tabernacle, the building sacred to the presence of God. The ark was the most sacred piece in that tabernacle (Numbers 3:5-10). On the previous trip David had substituted a cart and oxen for Levites.

David prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. He called representatives, once again, of all Israel and carefully selected Levites. It was a large company, 862 Levites alone, besides many from other tribes.

David's preparation and obedience to God's instructions highlight the importance of **seeking God's guidance** in all our endeavors. When we align our actions with God's will, we can move forward with confidence, knowing that we are on the right path. This story also reminds us that **God's instructions are purposeful** and meant to guide us towards success and fulfillment in His plans.

In our own lives, we may face situations where our initial attempts fail. Like David, we should take these moments as opportunities to **seek God's wisdom** and understand His ways more deeply. By doing so, we can correct our course and proceed with renewed assurance.

Moreover, David's careful selection of the Levites and the large company that accompanied the ark underscores the significance of **community and collaboration** in fulfilling God's work. It wasn't a solitary effort; it involved the collective participation of many, each playing their part in honoring God's presence.

As we reflect on this passage, let us be reminded of the importance of **obedience, preparation, and community** in our walk with God. When we follow His guidance and work together, we can achieve great things for His glory.

1 Chronicles 15:11-13 David separated the two priests and six chief Levites to carry the ark. Levites were sanctified—cleansed and set apart—to be fit to do God's work. First, sanctification of the tribe was done by shaving, washings, sacrifices and the offering of themselves (Numbers 8). Now David directed these Levites to **sanctify yourselves**. He plainly said the disaster of Uzza's death on the first trip was because they did not go to God for direction nor follow His rules.

This incident underscores the importance of obedience to God's commands and seeking His guidance in all our endeavors. David learned from the past mistake and ensured that the Levites were properly sanctified and followed God's instructions this time. This teaches us that **when we approach God's work, we must do so with reverence, preparation, and a heart willing to follow His ways.**

In our own lives, we must remember to seek God's direction and adhere to His principles. Just as the Levites were set apart for a holy purpose, we too are called to live lives that are sanctified and dedicated to God's service. **By**

doing so, we can avoid the pitfalls of disobedience and experience the blessings that come from walking in His will.

The Levites were chosen of God and cleansed as His priestly tribe to serve about the tabernacle. Only those who were sons of Aaron were priests. Kohathite Levites were carriers of the ark and other sanctuary vessels after they were covered by priests. **They shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.** God meant for these careful arrangements and rules to be strict. Why? Because the priestly tribe was to be a type of the church, God's cleansed and called-out people. He has **made us unto our God kings and priests (Revelation 5:10)**. The tabernacle vessels were types of the provisions God has given the church—the Savior, cleansing from sin, food and light of God's Word, prayer, consecration, and Holy Spirit baptism.

He shows us here how things are to be handled now, and who is to do it. Unsaved "strangers" have no part in the work of the church. God is teaching us a lesson of reverence that He requires in all sanctuary vessels. God punished carelessness and disobedience so severely to show how the Gospel and all God's gifts must be treated. The penalty for irreverent handling and unholy touching of spiritual work is a termination of spiritual life.

Furthermore, this reverence extends to our daily lives as believers. Just as the Levites were set apart for holy service, we too are called to live lives that reflect God's holiness and purpose. This means treating our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and ensuring that our actions, words, and thoughts align with God's will.

In addition, the strictness of God's commands to the Levites serves as a reminder of the seriousness of our spiritual responsibilities. We are entrusted with the Gospel, the most precious message of salvation, and we must handle it with utmost care and respect. This includes sharing the Gospel with love and truth, living out its principles in our daily lives, and nurturing our relationship with God through prayer, worship, and obedience.

Let us remember that our calling as God's people is not to be taken lightly. Just as the Levites were held to a high standard, we too are called to a life of holiness, reverence, and dedication to God's service. May we strive to honor God in all that we do, recognizing the privilege and responsibility of being His chosen people.

1 Chronicles 15:14-15 The Levites bare the ark . . . upon their shoulders with the staves thereon . . . according to the word of the Lord. Exodus 25:13-15 tells what the staves are to be made of and how they are to be used. Not upon a cart, but **upon their shoulders**--close, personal contact. It must be done as God said. Why did God decree that **the staves shall be in . . . they shall not be taken from it?** In Exodus 25:15-22, God commands that the staves (or poles) used to carry the Ark of the Covenant should remain in the rings of the ark and not be removed. This instruction emphasizes the **permanence and mobility** of God's presence among the Israelites. The ark symbolized God's dwelling place and His covenant with His people, and it needed to be ready to move with them wherever they went.

Here's a more detailed explanation:

The ark represented God's presence, and having the staves always in place ensured that the ark could be moved quickly and efficiently. This was crucial because God's presence was essential for guidance, protection, and blessing.

The instruction to keep the staves in the ark signifies the need for constant readiness to follow God's leading. Just as the Israelites needed to be ready to move with the ark, we are called to be ready to follow God's guidance in our lives.

The ark's role as a symbol of God's presence is mirrored in our lives through the Holy Spirit. Jesus' statement in John 14:16-17 that the Spirit would be in us and abide with us forever, highlights the continuous and intimate presence of God within us. This means that, like the Israelites, we must

carry God's presence into every aspect of our lives, allowing Him to guide and transform us.

Understanding this helps us recognize the importance of inviting God into all areas of our lives. Whether in our relationships, work, or personal growth, God's presence should be central, guiding our actions and decisions.

By keeping the staves in the ark, the Israelites were reminded of the ever-present and guiding nature of God. Similarly, we are reminded to keep God at the center of our lives, allowing His Spirit to lead us in all we do.

Nothing was to be placed between God's ark and His chosen carriers. Jesus, our high priest, carries the government of the church on His shoulder (Isaiah 9:6-7). Saints are priests and they are to carry the work of the church as He directs. Using that cart created a serious problem. Many problems in the church might be eliminated by discarding carts of human organizations, man made rules and programs, and boards removed from local church work. The responsibility for spiritual life (which proceeds from the Holy Spirit) cannot be removed from the shoulders of individual saints and successfully transferred to the pastor or denominational head. Outward activity or church membership cannot take the place of personal contact with God.

The significance of carrying the ark on the shoulders of the Levites, as opposed to placing it on a cart, underscores the importance of **personal responsibility and direct involvement** in our spiritual journey. Just as the Levites were to bear the ark with close, personal contact, we too are called to carry our faith intimately and personally.

In our modern context, this means that our relationship with God cannot be outsourced or delegated. It is not enough to rely solely on church programs, rituals, or leaders to sustain our spiritual life. Each of us must take personal responsibility for our walk with God, ensuring that His presence is with us in every aspect of our lives.

Jesus, our high priest, exemplifies this by carrying the government of the church on His shoulder (Isaiah 9:6-7). As saints and priests, we are to follow His example, carrying out the work of the church as He directs. This involves a **deep, personal connection with God**, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us.

When we attempt to replace this personal responsibility with human organizations, rules, and programs, we risk creating a disconnect between ourselves and God. Just as using a cart to carry the ark led to serious problems, relying on external structures can lead to spiritual stagnation and a lack of genuine connection with God.

Therefore, we need to discard the “carts” in our lives—those things that create distance between us and God—and embrace the personal, intimate relationship that He desires with each of us. We should carry His presence with us always, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and sustain us in all that we do.

1 Chronicles 15:25; 1 Chronicles 16:1 The company went with joy, knowing they were in the will of the Lord. **God helped the Levites.** They stopped and offered sacrifices in thanksgiving and worship. They moved along with shouting, singing, music, and joyous dancing. When the ark was settled in its prepared place in Jerusalem, David gave the people food and drink to celebrate. He set priests and Levites to care for the ark and serve continually before it.

The difference between the joy shown on the first trip and that on the second was the result of knowing God's will. By doing God's will, by acting in God's strength and not their own, and by following God's plan and not their own, their joy was full.

The joy experienced by the people was not just a fleeting emotion but a profound sense of fulfillment that comes from aligning with God's will. This joy was a testament to the power of obedience and faith. When we walk in God's will, we are not only blessed, but also become a blessing to others.

David's actions in providing food and drink symbolize the nourishment and sustenance that come from living a life dedicated to God.

Moreover, the presence of the ark in Jerusalem was a powerful reminder of God's faithfulness and His covenant with His people. It was a physical representation of God's presence among them, bringing peace and assurance. The priests and Levites serving continually before the ark highlight the importance of ongoing worship and dedication in our lives. Just as they were set apart for this holy task, we too are called to live lives of continual worship and service.

In our own lives, we can draw parallels to this story. When we seek God's guidance and follow His plan, we experience a deeper, more lasting joy. This joy is not dependent on our circumstances but is rooted in the assurance that we are walking in God's purpose for our lives. Let us strive to act in God's strength, follow His plan, and experience the fullness of joy that comes from being in His will.

Romans 8:8-9 The ark in the holy of holies of the tabernacle represented the closest communion of God with man then. God met the high priest there. The ark is a symbol or type of the experience of the closest communion of God and man now, that is, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Saved people are priests (Revelation 1:6) who were allowed to approach God. When Jesus died, the veil of the temple, which separated the holy place from the holy of holies, was **rent in twain**, opening the way for all of God's people to come close to God in Holy Spirit possession (Matthew 27:51).

Israel needed the ark as a contact with God. We need its antitype—Holy Spirit baptism—as our contact with God. We cannot please God while living in the flesh. We must live in the Spirit. He comes after one has repented and been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus. He comes when one surrenders himself to the Spirit to take complete control, and opens his heart for His entrance.

Romans 8:8-9 reminds us that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. This underscores the necessity of living in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only connects us to God but also empowers us to live a life that is pleasing to Him. Just as the high priest needed to be sanctified to enter the holy of holies, we too must be sanctified through the Holy Spirit to enter into a close communion with God. This sanctification is a continuous process of surrendering to the Spirit, allowing Him to transform us and guide us in our daily walk with God.

Furthermore, the tearing of the veil signifies that we now have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit. This access is not limited to a select few but is available to all who believe and are baptized in the Spirit. It is through this intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit that we can truly experience the fullness of God's presence and power in our lives. Let us, therefore, strive to live by the Spirit, continually seeking His guidance and allowing Him to lead us in all things.

CLOSING

As we reflect on the story of David and the Ark of the Covenant, we see a powerful lesson about obedience and reverence for God's instructions. In 1 Chronicles 15:1-5, we witness David's preparation to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. He understood the importance of following God's specific directions, appointing the Levites to carry the Ark as prescribed.

In 1 Chronicles 15:11-15, David's obedience is further highlighted. He gathered the priests and Levites, ensuring they were consecrated and ready to carry the Ark according to God's command. This act of reverence and adherence to God's way resulted in a successful and joyous procession, as described in 1 Chronicles 15:25.

When the Ark finally reached its destination, David's heart was filled with gratitude and worship. In 1 Chronicles 16:1, we see the Ark placed in the tent David had prepared, and offerings of burnt sacrifices and peace

offerings were made before God. This moment of worship and thanksgiving reminds us of the importance of honoring God in all we do.

Romans 8:8-9 reminds us that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in us. Just as David sought to honor God by following His instructions, we too must seek to live according to the Spirit, allowing God's presence to guide our actions and decisions.

In closing, let us remember the importance of obedience and reverence in our walk with God. Like David, may we strive to follow God's way in all aspects of our lives, trusting that His instructions lead to blessings and fulfillment. Let us commit to living by the Spirit, honoring God with our actions, and experiencing the joy and peace that come from walking in His ways.

JUST A THOUGHT

Jumping to conclusions is not half as good of an exercise as digging for facts.

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for this time of learning and fellowship. As we take a short break before our worship service, help us to carry the lessons we've learned into our hearts. Grant us the strength to forgive as You have forgiven us, and to show Your love and grace to everyone we meet.

Guide our thoughts Lord, and prepare us for our Sunday service. I pray that our hearts are open to Your word and we are ready to grow in our faith.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.