Public Biblical Praying
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Consider These Biblical Prayers & Pray-ers
Acts 4:24-30
• Content?
• Structure?

Jeremiah 32:17-25
• Content?
• Structure?

Nehemiah 9:5ff
• Content?
• Structure?

Background
• The Berekah, or blessing
  • Genesis 24:26-27: Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, saying, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master.”
  • Exodus 18:10-11: “Blessed be the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharoah, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians.”

A Longer Example of a Berekah
• I Kings 8:15-21
Background Continued

- The Berekah, or blessing
- The Hodayah, or acknowledgement (often as thanksgiving)
  - Isaiah 12:1: “I acknowledge to you, O Lord, that though you were angry with me, your anger turned away and you comforted me.”
  - Matthew 11:25: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.”

Bottom Line?
Prayer Rooted in Commemoration
Habakkuk 3:1-19
John 17:1-26

- How much time does Jesus spend remembering the Father’s saving activity in this prayer?

Ephesians 1:3-18

- Content? Structure?
- Notice the same basic flow: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who….for this reason I pray for you, asking…..
- Notice: From “Praise be to God who…” to “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who….”
  - Jesus provides for us the proper interpretation of the Big Biblical Story.

Remembrance in Prayer is….

- ….theological interpretation of human experience.
- ….confession or acknowledgement that puts the spotlight on God.
- ….a form of proclamation.

Later Examples

- Early 3rd century
- Late 4th century
- 16th century
- Even more recent
Implications for Worship

- A Distinctive Story makes a Distinctive People for a Distinctive God.
- God is revealed in what God has done.
- Worship is rooted in memory.
- Prayer is rooted in memory.

Implications for Prayer, Spoken

- Structure of prayer: remembering to asking; praising to interceding
- Content of prayer: story, story, story; remember, remember, remember; pray the Bible story
- Long prayers
  - Pastoral prayers/intercessory prayers
  - Prayers at baptisms
  - Prayers at the Lord’s Supper
  - Prayers at great days in the year
- Short prayers: name God, remember what God has done, ask God, state desired result (connection made), pray through Christ, Amen.

Exercises

- Consider a powerful aspect of Jesus’ ministry (an individual story or a type of story). Compose a prayer that remembers this aspect of ministry, praises/thanks God for it, and then uses it as a basis for intercession.
- Consider God’s mighty acts of salvation that involved water. Compose a prayer that praises God for this remembrance, tying it to a final intercession for people about to be baptized.
- Consider God’s mighty acts of salvation that involved food. Compose a prayer that praises God for this remembrance, tying it to a final petition dealing with the Lord’s Supper.
- Consider the Big Story of creation and redemption. Compose a prayer that remembers this, concluding with an intercession inspired by this Story and appropriate for a situation today.
Implications for Prayer, Sung

- Where are songs that remember God’s activity on a larger scale?
- Is it a false dichotomy to separate speaking about God and speaking to God?
- Use songs with commemorative, narrative content.
- If your repertoire does not include such songs, how can the scriptural story (read, testified, and visualized) provide a commemorative context for your songs?

Exercises

- Think of a short praise song. What Bible story about God’s saving activity might be read in front of the song to provide a commemorative context?
- Think of a praise chorus. What other song with a strong commemorative basis in God’s saving activity might be sung in front of it? Or, vice versa. Think of a song with strong commemorative content. What short praise/intercession song might follow it as an appropriate response?