

עֲמִידָה

Amidah - Lesson 2

Last week we looked at the first nine prayers of the Amidah—this week we will focus on the last nine. By way of review, last week we said that one should pray with “kavanah” i.e., with *focused intent*. For this reason many people who pray the daily prayers put the tallit over their head to block out all distractions. This should also remind us that we can be a distraction to others. Even though it might be a good thing I’m thinking about doing (like stopping to say “hi” or just to chat for a minute), I should ask myself this question: “is my friend praying or concentrating on the prayers or on the worship?” If so, even a friendly “hello” can be a distraction.



The reason one stands for the Amidah is twofold. First, by standing one’s concentration tends to be more direct. Secondly, in the Ancient Near East, one would address a king by standing before him, thus demonstrating respect. When we stand for the Amidah, we’re saying that



we want to put other things aside and give our full attention to the King as we pray before Him.

When one prays they should face toward the east (or toward the Torah Scroll, since the Torah will go forth from Zion) since our prayers should be directed toward the Temple in Jerusalem, or the place where it will be rebuilt. The prayers which make up the Amidah (also called the Shemonei Esrei, meaning “eighteen”) existed orally before they were written down. In the book of Acts the leaders of the church devoted themselves to the reading of the word and

“the prayers.” Daniel the prophet set the standard for daily prayer by praying three times a day—morning, afternoon, and evening.

Let’s look at prayers 10 through 19. The tenth and eleventh prayers ask that G-d would restore His people to the Land and that the leaders of the nation would also be restored. The twelfth and thirteenth ask for G-d to subdue the arrogant while showing compassion to the righteous. The fourteenth and fifteenth ask G-d to rebuild Jerusalem and to put the son of David, our Messiah Yeshua, on the throne of Israel! The sixteenth and seventeenth prayers ask for G-d to hear our prayers and respond in a favorable fashion. The last prayer is one of hope, thanks, and blessing G-d for all He has done and will do.