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Positions and Conditions in Prayer

Variety is a divine principle in more than one realm, and a change of position may be as beneficial to the mind as to the body. Heart attitude is all-important, and unless the exterior is a true index of an interior state, it is of no worth. A physical attitude which embitters the mind, adopted because of the dictates of custom, is penance of doubtful value. A reverential attitude of spirit will not necessarily result in a predetermined angle of the body, although it will result in care being taken to avoid offending others.

The absence of definite instructions is of interest, and indicates holy liberty. It may be questioned, however, if any Christian has ever been able to get sufficiently low before his Lord, in heart and body. The Man of Gethsemane is a compelling example to those burdened with the ambition to know more of the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death.

There are two other minor prayer attitudes which are appealing. The first is described in 1 Chronicles 17:16, "And David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God...?" It is apparent that no lack of reverence was responsible for this position, for the whole prayer is marked by humble wonder at the exceeding grace of God. The man who had been lifted from the obscurity of the sheepfold and set in the fierce light which beats about a throne, was kept back from such presumptuous sin.

Our calling also is regal, and as those who have been exalted to sit among princes, we may confidently do as David did, and go in to sit before the Lord. Restfully,

humbly, sit down under His shadow with great delight, to listen, to speak, to enjoy the silence. Shut in from intruding earthly affairs; seated at the feet of our Lord with an engaged heart, oblivious to all else; to delight in a strange, deep joy, too rarely tasted by us. When knees grow weary and feet falter by reason of the upward way, shall we not follow the steps of the great king, and go to sit in sacred nearness beside Him who poured out His blood to make us near?

The second position, also

David's, is mentioned in Psalm 63:6: "When I remember Thee upon my bed and meditate on Thee in the night watches." The recumbent posture of the body can match the repose of the mind. It may be the attitude of sinful sloth, but in contrast, it may be the position of meditation, and so conducive to effectual prayer. Not until that Day shall we know how the prayers of bedridden saints have prevailed.

The psalm seems to be one of the wilderness series, written at a time when faith would be in extreme demand, and no soft touch available for the outlaw's tired limbs. In some forest retreat or secret cave he would find a drafty shelter, aptly likening himself to a driven partridge. Then the consolations of God were not small. He remembered the promises made to his forefathers; felt fresh upon his brow the holy anointing oil; recalled the victory over Goliath; heard the homeward march of divine purposes, and with an eagle's gaze saw the glorious future outlined. There he lay, a man with a price on his head, hunted, hated, homeless, and yet the man after God's own heart, and the ancestor of the King of kings. He saw through a glass darkly in

that rude sanctuary, but the vision made him a worshipper. Listen to his song in the night: "For Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee...My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips, When I remember Thee upon my bed!" (Ps. 63:3-6, Darby).