

**Exegetical Notes, Exodus 30:1-10**  
**“The Importance of Prayer”**

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(After the affirmation of the Covenant {See Exodus 24}, God set up a system of organized religion to help the Israelites remember the obligation of the Covenant to which they had agreed. This religion was centered in the Tabernacle and its furnishings. These items were to remind the people of God’s presence and of their obligation to listen to God and to obey him. The promise of God’s blessing was linked to listening to him and obeying him.)

**Exodus 30:1-10**

**Verse 1-6**

*“Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high -- its horns of one piece with it. Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding -- two on opposite sides -- to hold the poles used to carry it. Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Put the altar in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the Testimony -- before the atonement cover that is over the Testimony -- where I will meet with you.”*

- Moses was instructed to construct a small altar. This altar was to be overlaid with gold and placed directly before the throne of God in the Tent in the Tabernacle. The only thing separating this altar from the throne was the curtain that divided the Holy Place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept from the rest of the tent.

**Verse 7-8**

*“Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamp. He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before YHWH for the generations to come.”*

- Twice each day, in the morning and at night, Aaron was to burn incense on this altar before the throne of God.

- The smoke that rises from burning incense is a symbol of the prayers of the people to God. Prayers, then, are to be offered to God at the beginning of each day and at the close of each day. The incense burning is a reminder of this call to prayer.
- The incense was to have a pungent smell so that its smell would call people to pray.

### **Verse 9-10**

***“Do not offer on this altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering, and do not pour a drink offering on it. Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to YHWH.”***

- No other offering is to be made on this altar. It is reserved for prayer and prayer alone.
- Each year the altar was to be rededicated to its purpose. Blood from the sin offering was to be placed on the horns of the altar as an act of rededication.
- This altar was to be regarded as “most holy to YHWH.” It had a very special place in Israel’s religious system and worship.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Importance of Prayer*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)