

### Stretching of hands by the celebrant priest

The celebrant priest during Divine Liturgy stretches his hands and starts to chant One is God the Father, One is God the Son and One is God the Holy Spirit. (Ahadu Abe Kidus, Ahadu Wolde Kidus, Ahadu Menfes Kidus)

This is where we declare the theology of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Everything we do in the Orthodox Church is Trinitarian. We are speaking **to the Father**, **through** the Son and **by** the Holy Spirit.

Reference: Ephesians 2:18 For **through Him** we both have access **by** one Spirit **to** the Father.

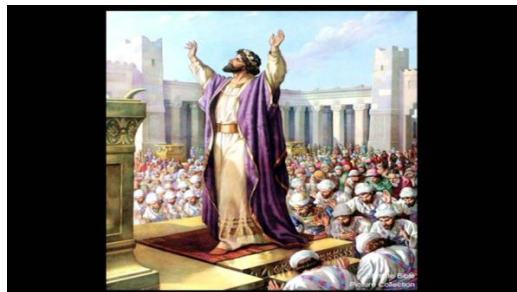
### Symbol of stretching of hands by the celebrant priest

1. It is biblical. King Solomon knelt and stretched his hands throughout the prayer for the consecration of the temple. Instead of folding his hands like we normally do, Solomon stretched out his palms heavenward. It wasn't drawing attention to himself, but directing acclaim to his God and asking for God's blessing. The other priests, deacon and the parishioners should follow the celebrant priest in stretching their hands out.

**Reference:** 1 kings 8: 54-55 And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, that he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. He stood and in a loud voice blessed the entire congregation of Israel.



2 Chronicles 6:12 Then *Solomon* stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands.



2. The stretching of hands is also a fulfillment of the prophecy of David the Psalmist saying “Ethiopia stretches her hands unto God. **Psalm 68:31** This prophecy is still being fulfilled in the churches and monasteries of Ethiopia across the globe.



David also said in Psalm 141:2 Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

So not only are we called to lift up our hands at church but the Psalmist tells us to lift up our hands in prayer at all times in our homes and work places. Do we lift our hands in prayer? Do we lift our hands to serve those in need? Do we offer our hands in friendship, solidarity and love? Do we lift our hands and bless our Children before they set out for the day in God’s name. It is a sign of humility to stretch out one’s hand. It means God is the giver and we are the receivers. Amen.