

Praying Together

Matthew 18:19 – 20

I. Intro

A. **READ Matthew 18:19 – 20**

B. Jesus says these words right after He talks about how to deal with a brother or sister in Christ that has done wrong against us

C. **ASK:** Why do think Jesus takes this moment to mention about two being in **agreement**, and two or three gathered together – obviously, if Jesus brings it up it has some importance?

D. Look at several examples of people praying together in OT and NT

II. Old Testament Examples

A. King Jehoshaphat and people of Judah: **READ 2 Chronicles 20:1 – 13; 14 – 18**

B. **ASK:** What are some things that we as a church should be praying together about?

C. Esther story:

i. King Xerxes (Artaxerxes) ruled over Persia and Media

ii. God's people still in exile in Babylon (time of King Nebuchadnezzar, but Medes and Persians have conquered Babylon)

iii. Xerxes giving a banquet; his wife, Queen Vashti, also giving a banquet for ladies; Xerxes summons the Queen to come to his banquet so he can show off her beauty, Vashti refuses; Xerxes is humiliated, angered so decides to get a new queen

iv. Esther and her cousin Mordecai are some of exiles; Esther is gathered up with all the women as part of the king's search for another queen; ultimately Esther is chosen to be new queen, but she doesn't reveal her nationality – that she's Hebrew

v. Xerxes then decides to honor a man named Haman, giving him a place of high honor in his court; king then ordered that all people would bow down and honor Haman – Mordecai didn't; Haman finds out and also told Mordecai is a Jew so Haman orders that all Jews be destroyed and getting the king to go along with his plan (again, Xerxes still does not know Esther's nationality)

vi. When Mordecai hears of this order, he notifies Esther and asks her to go to the king in order spare the lives of God's people

vii. Esther's response to Mordecai: **READ Esther 4:15 – 17**

D. **ASK:** Are there people whose lives are in jeopardy that we should be praying about together? Yes, the unsaved

- E. **Gaines illustration:** People praying together is like a magnifying glass – greater focus on what’s specifically being prayed for**

III. New Testament Examples

- A. Lord’s disciples, after His ascension, gathered in upper room waiting for the empowering of the Holy Spirit; Acts 1:12-14 (NIV)**
- 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.
- 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.
- 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.
- B. Peter stands up and talks about need to replace Judas who betrayed Jesus – Judas’ betrayal was a fulfillment of scripture; Acts 1:23-24 (NIV)**
- 23 So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.
- 24 Then they prayed, ...
- C. Acts 2:42 (NIV)**
- 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- D. Peter and John outside the temple in Jerusalem, heal a lame man, Peter preaches and many are saved; Jewish religious leaders demand that Peter and John stop preaching in name of Jesus, they refuse and thrown in jail; when religious leaders couldn’t decide how to punish them they let them go**
- i. **Acts 4:23-24 (NIV)**
- 23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.
- 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.
- ...
- ii. **Acts 4:31 (NIV)**
- 31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.
- E. King Herod had James killed, and again Peter was imprisoned: Acts 12:5 (NIV)**

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

i. **An angel appears and delivers Peter from prison right from under the nose of two guards chained to Peter**

ii. **READ Acts 12:11 – 16**

F. **Question:** Isn't it interesting that we still at times don't really truly understand the power of prayer? In prayer, there's certainly power in numbers

G. **Matthew 18:19 (NIV)**

¹⁹ "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

H. **The Lord blesses people who pray together**

I. **ASK:** Of the time we spend together as church body, would you like to spend more or less time together in prayer? How much time should we spend together in prayer?

IV. Close

A. **Challenge:** Call one Christian friend this week and pray together one time – see where goes from there

B. Ask 3 volunteers to voice prayer for us as we close