

The Priority of Prayer
Part 2 – The Early Church
Acts 1:12 – 14

I. Intro

- A. Continue talking about priority, vital importance of prayer – as basis, foundation for all we do and undertake as individual believers and as a church**
- B. Last week – prayer priority in Jesus' life; tonight – see the priority of prayer in early church**
- C. READ Acts 1:12 – 14**

II. Other Examples in Early Church

- A.1 – Early church started with 10 day prayer meeting**
 - i. Time between Christ's resurrection and ascension was 40 days; after ascension disciples gather in upper room in Jerusalem (v. 14); on Day of Pentacost (Acts 2) the Holy Spirit came upon those disciples and they left the upper room and miraculously began *declaring the wonders of God* in the languages of the people who were listening**
 - ii. A 10 day prayer meeting, God's people filled with power of Holy Spirit, the disciples share the Gospel, Peter preaches the Gospel and gives an invitation and thousands come to believe in Christ**
- B.2 – Prayer shakes people up (Acts 3, 4)**
 - i. Peter and John on their way to temple when they meet a lame beggar at the gate called Beautiful; when they tell him about Jesus, and they heal the man a crowd gathers, Peter preaches, and again many believe in Christ**
 - ii. Jewish religious leaders are infuriated; arrest Peter and John and command them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus – Peter and John refuse to stop**
 - iii. Peter and John are released, they immediately head back to be with other Christians and all start an intense time of prayer asking the Lord to give them boldness to declare the Gospel**
 - iv. 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.

III. Factual Truth about Prayer

- A.1 – Prayer must precede preaching and witnessing; in the NT Gospels you'll always find that before message of Christ, God's kingdom is shared it was always preceded with prayer; no believer has any business trying to**

talk **FOR** God in preaching and/or witnessing until they have first talked **WITH** God in prayer

B.2 – God speaks to us, and others, when we pray

- i. Peter first had an issue with the Gospel being spread among Gentiles
- ii. In Acts 10, God gives Peter a vision of sheet with all types of animals, even animals considered unclean according to Jewish law, and the Lord tells Peter in Acts 10:15 (NIV)

15 ... "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

- iii. Our world, even in the church, is filled with prejudice today; God spoke to Peter through prayer and changed Peter's attitude towards Gentiles

C.3 – God works miracles when we pray

- i. In Acts 12, King Agrippa has James, John, and Peter arrested – James is killed and Peter imprisoned more than likely about to be put to death; at night Peter is asleep in prison between two guards and an angel appears; Peter's chains fall off and the angel leads him out of prison completely unharmed
- ii. Peter goes to the home church where many believers are gathered in prayer, specifically praying for Peter's safety

D.4 – God calls people to missions when we pray

- i. A groups of prophets, teachers gather at Church at Antioch for worship, prayer, and fasting; there the Holy Spirit calls the first missionaries and the group lays their hands on two men, Paul and Barnabas, and sends them out to share Christ and minister to gentiles – Greeks and Romans

E. Any believer, whether clergy or lay person, can have correct theology, but if their prayer life is minimal or even non-existent, any work they may do for the kingdom of Christ is in vain

IV. Questions for Discussion

- A. **ASK:** Referring back to Acts 1:14, what can we learn about prayer from this verse? **ANS: 1** – Prayed together; **2** – Prayer was constant; **3** – Prayed as family, blood related family, and spiritually related family
- B. **ASK:** Is praying alone enough? Why is it so important that believers pray together?
- C. **ASK:** Are these type of results from prayer no longer possible in this day and time? Were these powerful results among God's people just because it was the early beginning of the Christian church?
- D. **ASK:** What do think could happen in our church if we prayed in the power of the Holy Spirit together just as those early believers in the early church did? **READ Acts 2:44-47**