

Friday — May 1

Praying Beyond Ourselves

Acts 2:42d

They devoted themselves to ... the prayers.

The fourth devotion of the early church was prayer. Not just personal prayer — the prayers. The communal, shared, spoken-together prayers of the gathered people of God. Prayer was something they did with each other, not only alone.

It is easy to keep prayer small — to pray for ourselves, our families, our needs. And that is right and good. The Psalms are full of personal cries to God, and He welcomes every one of them. But the early church was learning to pray the way Jesus taught: Our Father. Not my Father. Our.

What would it look like this week to pray for the community around you — not just for yourself? Start close. Pray for the people you know well and love. Then push a little further: pray for the people in your church you do not know as well. Then push further still: pray for the people in your life who frustrate you, who are hard to love, who sit across from you with their own wounds and walls.

That kind of prayer changes you. You cannot pray sincerely for someone and stay indifferent to them. Prayer is how we practice belonging to one another before we ever act on it. The life we share begins on our knees.

Discussion Questions

1. Who is someone in your church or community that you rarely pray for? What would it mean to begin doing that?
2. Why do you think praying together — out loud, as a community — is different from praying alone?
3. Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father." What difference does that one word "our" make in how you think about prayer?

Closing Prayer

Our Father, teach us to pray the way Your Son taught us — not just for ourselves, but for one another. Give us hearts that are turned outward, eyes that see the needs around us, and lips that are willing to bring those needs before Your throne. Bind us together as a people of prayer, for the sake of Jesus, who intercedes for us even now. Amen.

Family Action Item

Try a new practice this week: each morning, before you pray for yourself, pray for one other person by name — someone from your church, neighborhood, or community. Work outward as the week goes on: from someone you love, to someone you barely know, to someone who is difficult. At the end of the week, talk together about what you noticed.