

Pray with the End in Mind

Part 2

“After they prayed”

- Prayer is more than bringing requests to God; Prayer is about meeting with God.
- It's when God has your attention and you have His.
- It's better in raw form than polished for the approval of man.
- Prayer is a callous remover, it keeps me sensitive to God and those around me.
- Prayer allows me the opportunity to practice personal repentance.
- Prayer keeps my priorities in order.

“Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying.”

– E.M. Bounds

“Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed” – E.M. Bounds

Story of Prayer:

Curtis and Ruth Butler were Missionaries in the Philippines and a big storm came through. All the water as a result was taken out. Curtis and Ruth Butler set themselves to pray and then unexpectedly and out of the blue a man showed up and filled all of their water containers. They don't know who the man was or how he even knew of their need. He quickly disappeared and they found themselves in a miracle situation, all of their water reservoirs were full. After they had prayed...

Acts 1

4 On one occasion, while he (Jesus) was eating with them, he gave them this command: **“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised,** which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

12 Then the apostles 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.

Acts 2

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. **2** Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

- The early disciples had no idea the fullness of what Jesus spoke of...
- They only know that Jesus said, *“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised”*
- There is something to be said about waiting in the presence of the Lord...
- Thankfully they were obedient and they made their way to Jerusalem...
- They all joined together constantly in prayer...
- And **After they Prayed**
- Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven...
- All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...

“Have you any days of fasting and prayer? Storm the throne of grace and persevere therein, and mercy will come down.” – John Wesley

You just never know what's right around the corner...

God knows what's around the corner, and he calls us to Pray...

So that after we've prayed, we are ready for the Suddenly's of the Holy Spirit...

Story: Motorcycle; God told me you don't know what I have right around the corner for you.

Acts 3

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer —at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

Perhaps it's easy to overlook something very important in this text...
“Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer”

There was a culture of prayer
a hunger for prayer
a desire to commune with God
Having no idea what would happen next
And what followed after prayer was miracle after miracle

Acts Chapter 4 goes on to say that Peter and John had been teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead and the leaders of the Sanhedrin were greatly distressed because of it. They seized them and put them in jail because of it.

Acts 4

⁵ The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem...

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⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

11 Jesus is

“the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.’

12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

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18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

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21 After further threats they let them go.

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23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, **they raised their voices together in prayer to God.**

“Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

26

The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord

and against his anointed one.’

27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and

enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

30 *Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

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.

After they prayed:

They saw God's mighty hand heal the sick
They witnessed signs and wonders in Jesus name
And the place was Shaken
They were filled with Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God Boldly

“Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!” – Andrew Murray

- Expect Great things and Pray Great things...
- What if all of what you received and all of what you achieved in this life was brought to you by prayer. How would you pray then?

“The reason why we obtain no more in prayer is because we expect no more. God usually answers us according to our own hearts.”
– Richard Alleine

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Acts 6

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right

for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.
3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 **and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.**”

Moral of the story:

- In this life you will have distractions
- Even the early church faced the same kind of obstacles
- Legitimate things that pulled at them...
- The early Apostles made arrangements to give their attention to God in Prayer, and after they prayed the Church continued to grow...

- Throughout the book of Acts the word pray is found 34 times...
- The subsequent result of prayer is the intervention of God...
- If a person would desire God to work they should pray...
- If a person would desire to hear God's voice they should pray...
- If a Miracle needed, then prayer is needed...
- Prayer is the free and open invitation from God to come at anytime, for any reason and ask the one who is without limit.