

Ekklesia (part 2): Praying boldly

Pastor Rick – 5/1/22

What do you pray about? What do your prayers look like?

Last week I wanted you to rethink how to think about church.

I want to push you out of your comfort zone when it comes to prayer! Even change how your pray!

And when we are done today—you will be given a challenge to pray boldly in ways maybe you have never thought of!

Which is the church?

From the very beginning the church has been a movement, and was launched around an event in history.

Acts 1:6-8

The church wasn't for church people, because there weren't any church people and it wasn't about a tradition or a style or a way of doing anything, because there was none of that. But there was an energy, there was a dynamic, there was a momentum, there was movement, and the world has never been the same since!

Acts 2:42-47

But do you know what happened over time?

Before long, this outwardly focused movement that was about passion, love, serving, sharing and acceptance, this outwardly focused movement began to turn inward.

Christians in Jerusalem had favor with the people.

How a church prays indicates whether it has strayed from being a movement!

I want you to think for just a minute about the prayers that you pray, the things you pray about.

The thing that all of your prayers and all of my prayers and all the prayers have in common is that the center of our prayers is typically who?

So I want to challenge you to start praying a different kind of prayers!

Acts 4:12-14

Acts 4:15-22

How would you respond at this point?

Acts 4:29

Have you ever in your life prayed for boldness? Do you remember the last time you prayed for boldness?

Do you know why the message of Jesus got to the twenty-first century?

In part, because the first century Christians had boldness and prayed for it!

Acts 4:30

God, would you please stretch out your hand and do something through me in my community, among my unbelieving friends, among my anti-church friends, among my friends that have been burned by religion and have every reason in the world . . . God, would you be willing to stretch out your hand and do something unusual? Not for my benefit, not in the church, but for the benefit of those who don't believe.

Can you imagine what would happen if we began to pray like the first century believers?

Acts 4:31-32

Suddenly, along with this boldness, there was an outbreak of extreme generosity!

It was just as they became outsider-focused, as they became concerned about their community, as they began to talk about the resurrection, there was an outbreak of generosity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Look up the Scriptures mentioned in this message and share your insights and observations.
2. How can you shift your prayers from a self-centered approach to a God-centered one?
3. What might God be asking you to apply from this message to your life this week?

IDEAS FOR PRAYING TOGETHER

Write down the name of yet-to-believe friends on 3x5 cards, one name per card. Write a brief description of how to pray for the needs of each person. Hand out the cards and pray in groups of 2 or 3 over the names. Collect them at the end of the meeting so that they can be redistributed to pray again at the next meeting.

Take a prayer walk around dorms, campus, or your workplace. Pray for students, professors, and/or co-workers to find Christ. Pray for each Christian group on campus. Ask God to show you what He is wanting to do in each arena. Then, pray it.

Pray a Scripture passage. Personalize prayers by inserting "I" or "me" where necessary, or the person's name for whom you are praying.

Here's an example:

1 Thessalonians 3:13 May he [Dear Lord] strengthen your [my] hearts so that you [I] will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Or take the main ideas from the above passage and form your own prayer like this: "Dear Lord, please strengthen my heart-level determination to do what is right. Give me your grace to make decisions that lead to holiness."

Choose a Scripture for the small group to use to pray for different needs:

- For those yet to believe
 - Isaiah 55:6-8;
 - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5;
 - Ephesians 5:14-18;
 - Psalm 107 (Pray for the different types of people described.)
- For believers
 - Ephesians 1:17-19;
 - Ephesians 3:14-19;
 - Colossians 1:9-14;
 - 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13;
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12;
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
- For revival, use Isaiah's cry for revival in Isaiah 64:1-5.
- For spiritual power, use the early disciples' prayer in Acts 4:29-31

More ideas: <https://www.toolsformentoring.com/resources/small-group-helps/prayer-ideas.php>