

Becoming a Praying Church

Acts 4:23-31

p. 1084

What we've said so far:

A healthy church is a congregation that increasingly reflects God's character - as his character has been revealed in his word.

*A church's **ultimate** priority is to glorify God.

*Two **essential** marks of a healthy church are:

→ Expositional Preaching, and → Sound Gospel Doctrine.

*Other **important** marks of a healthy church are:

- a right understanding of conversion & evangelism;
- a biblical understanding of church membership;
- biblical church discipline;
- a biblical concern for discipleship and growth;
- biblical church leadership.

*Two final **important** marks of a healthy church are:

→ biblical understandings of the practices of prayer & missions.

1. What is Prayer?

Simply put, prayer is talking to God.

2. Does Prayer "work"?

a. God regularly answers some prayers.

→ God delights in our prayers.

→ God chooses to work in response to our prayers.

→ Answered prayer is one way we bear fruit to God's glory.

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."
(John 15:7)

b. God does not answer other prayers.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
(2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

c. There are also prayers that God does not hear.

"Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, Is it to inquire of me that you come? As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I will not be inquired of by you.'"
(Ezekiel 20:3)

*If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.*
(Psalm 66:18)

(Also see... Zechariah 7:13, Isaiah 1:15, Proverbs 1:24-25)

*Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way ...
so that your prayers may not be hindered.*
(1 Peter 3:7)

3. Learning to Pray Together...

↳ A church's corporate prayer life should grow out of its members' individual prayer lives.

↳ Some specific words can be especially helpful in leading a church well in corporate prayer.

↳ Different kinds of public prayers help us as a local church.

↳ Prayer should characterize not only our public services but also our leadership meetings, staff meetings, and our interpersonal interactions.