

SCRIPTURES (NIV)

Acts 4:23-31

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.

KEY POINTS:

Questions to Ponder:

- Do You think of prayer the way the early church thought of prayer?
- Do you struggle to remember to pray?
- Why should we pray?
- What is prayer?

Types of Prayer:

#1 - **Flare Gun** - This type of prayer is used in desperate times, when we are lost, have no resources, or are calling out to God as a last ditch effort. This type of prayer should have occurred much sooner but we seek to have a need met that we can't do it ourselves.

- Related Scripture:

- Proverbs 16:9 - *"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."*
- Jeremiah 10:23 - *"LORD, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps."*
- Matthew 6:26 - *"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"*

#2 - **Service Bell** - This type of prayer is used when we have a 'want', need attention, need inner peace, or for a convenience. There is a conditional "IF" associated with this type of prayer as noted in these scriptures:

- James 4:2-3 - *You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

- Matthew 21:22 - *"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."*

- John 17:20 - *"...if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

Effective prayer means having a heart that belongs to God and having faith in the cross of Jesus.

#3 - **Walkie Talkie** - This type of prayer is about the kingdom and the mission of the church. The implication is that action is needed to defeat the enemy and the scene is the battlefield which needs wartime communications.

#4 - **Two Coffee Mugs** - This type of prayer is about communications face to face and heart to heart with God (being in Jesus Presence). It is about being connected to God no matter where you are; always being in the presence of God. It means spending time with Him in worship, thankfulness, praise and with a listening heart

EARLY CHURCH PRAYERS: The early church reminded themselves of what God has done. They prayed for boldness and that they would perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. They realized that God was in charge and that He has poured out His Spirit on them. They also realized that they needed God himself to be with them always.

WHY WE DON'T PRAY - We don't pray because our view of prayer is too small which makes our desires small and our view of God small. These views inhibit our life in Jesus, His boldness, and His life. We need to understand that God is self-existent...He is not missing out on anything with us....we are the ones who miss out on Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do You think of prayer the way the early church thought of prayer? In what ways are our approach to praying different?
2. What do you think "BOLDNESS" in prayer and in ACTION looks like? What does BOLDNESS mean? Do we lack the confidence in God to be bold?
3. Did the members of the early church seek a strong relationship with God through prayer in order to stand firm in their faith and to boldly proclaim the Gospel? How can we increase our individual and collective prayer life to empower believers to fulfill their God-given purposes?
4. What inhibits us from desiring boldness...fear, lack of obedience, lack of love for God and others, ashamed of God, lack of a divine relationship with Jesus? How can we fix that?
5. What role did the Holy Spirit have in response to the church's prayer? Was His response an affirmation of their prayers? How did this instance of Holy Spirit power relate to Pentecost?
6. It is noted that the church members did not offer any solutions to the persecution of Peter and John but left the matter wholly in the hands of the Lord, but also asked God to fill their need for power to speak boldly. What lesson(s) might be learned from the early church's approach?
7. Of the 4 types of Prayer mentioned above, which resembles your style and preference? Did the sermon/study modify your thoughts on your prayer life?
8. Do you think our current view of prayer is too small? What does that really mean? How do we enlarge our prayer life?