

Monday

The Power of a Praying Church

Jesus promised that great things would happen when two people agree together in prayer. Great things also happen when an entire church comes together in prayer. There are many great benefits of whole-hearted, corporate prayer.

1. Read Acts 1:12-14 – One of the benefits of corporate prayer is that it promotes unity. The expression “with one accord” gives the idea of having the same passion. How could having the same passion about something promote unity?
2. Read Psalm 133:1-3 – Describe how God feels about unity.
3. What is the benefit of unity for everyone else?
4. Corporate prayer promotes unity. It also brings God’s special power. Read Acts 1:8 – What did Jesus promise would be coming?
5. Read Acts 1:14 – What were the people doing while they were waiting?
6. Read Acts 2:1-4 – What was unmistakably displayed to the people on the day of Pentecost?
7. Another benefit of corporate prayer is that it signals God’s presence. How did God demonstrate His presence in Acts 2?
8. Though God doesn’t do that today, what are some other ways that God could demonstrate His presence?

Take advantage of the great benefits of corporate prayer!

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Jesus promised that great things would happen when two people agree together in prayer. Great things also happen when an entire church comes together in prayer. Corporate prayer is not just a formal ritual of predetermined word; it addresses real issues and real needs.

1. The church can take any need to God in prayer. The early church had two major needs that they faithfully took to God in prayer. When they did, God answered. Read Acts 4:23-31 – God had just used Peter to heal a lame man. The people who saw it were amazed. The Sanhedrin didn’t like that. They called for Peter and John and threatened them not to speak of Christ again. According to verse 23, what did they do after they were released by the Sanhedrin?
2. According to verse 24, what did the whole group do when they heard what happened to Peter and John?
3. They made their main request in verse 29. What was it?
4. Considering what just happened to Peter and John, why do you think it was so important for them to pray for boldness?
5. According to verse 31, what amazing thing happened after they finished praying?
6. Read Ephesians 6:18-20 – For what did Paul ask the Ephesian people to pray for him?
7. Paul use the phrase “as I ought to speak” at the end of verse 20. Is it right for us to speak boldly for Christ?

It’s easy to look at early church leaders and Paul and think that we could never reach their level of boldness for Christ. They achieved it through prayer. The same is available to us through prayer.

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Jesus promised that great things would happen when two people agree together in prayer. Great things also happen when an entire church comes together in prayer. Corporate prayer is not just a formal ritual of predetermined word; it addresses real issues and real needs.

1. The early church and early missionaries spent much time in prayer for Holy Spirit boldness to proclaim the Gospel as they ought to. It is easy to see how God answered their prayer. The early church had other needs which they took to God in prayer. Read Acts 1:15-26 – Judas killed himself after he betrayed Jesus and realized what he had done. Now there was a vacancy with the Apostles. They needed to find a replacement, so they came up with their qualifications. According to verses 21-22, what were the qualifications for the next man who would take Judas' place?
2. According to verse 23, what two men did they appoint?
3. The Apostles were the pastors of the first church. This was a major decision! According to verse 24-25, what did they do to ensure that they chose the right man for the job?
4. What devastating effects could have happened if they chose the wrong replacement for Judas?
5. What does I Timothy 2:1-2 teach about praying for church leaders?
6. What does II Thessalonians 3:2 teach about praying for church leaders?

Pastors are people too. They have good days and bad. Sometimes they are positive; sometimes they get discouraged. Be sure to pray for your pastors!

Thursday The Power of a Praying Church

Jesus promised that great things would happen when two people agree together in prayer. Great things also happen when an entire church comes together in prayer. However, corporate prayer isn't a blank check for the church. There are some requirements that the church must meet first.

1. First, there must be commitment to regular gatherings for the purpose of prayer. The early church was whole-heartedly committed to prayer. Read Acts 2:42 – How does this verse describe the church's commitment to regular corporate prayer?
2. The example of the early church teaches us that corporate prayer cannot be a second thought or something we do if we have nothing else to do. Corporate prayer must be a top priority. What do we show to God when we don't make corporate prayer a priority in our church?
3. There also needs to be a whole-hearted commitment to continual prayer. Read 1:14 – What does that verse say about the early church's commitment to continual prayer?
4. Why do you think that sporadic, hit-and-miss prayer would be ineffective?
5. The example of the early church teaches us that continual corporate prayer is necessary. We can't come to God just whenever we feel like or whenever we need or want something. What do we show to God when we don't make continual prayer a priority in our church?

Corporate prayer requires some commitment. The benefits are well worth the commitment it requires.

Friday

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Jesus promised that great things would happen when two people agree together in prayer. Great things also happen when an entire church comes together in prayer. However, corporate prayer isn't a blank check for the church. There are some requirements that the church must meet first.

1. There must be commitment to regular gatherings and continual prayer. There are two other requirements for corporate to be effective. Read Acts 2:1 – What phrase in that verse describes the unity of the early church?
2. The words “all,” “one accord,” and “one place” all help us to understand their attitude toward each other. It wasn't only one group that came together in one accord. Everyone in the whole church was in agreement with everyone. They all had the same passion. Why do you think that unity is so important for corporate prayer?
3. The phrase “one accord” or “one mind” is used ten times in the book of Acts. What does that teach us about the importance of unity in the church, not just in the area of prayer?
4. The final requirement is a commitment to fervency. Read James 5:16 – What promise comes with fervent prayer?
5. Read Colossians 4:12 – How did Paul describe Epaphras' prayer life?
6. Paul said that Epaphras “laboured fervently” in prayer. Fervent prayer is work! How can you work hard this week in your prayer life?

The early church met the requirements for corporate prayer, and they saw God do great things. Let's do the same!

Saturday

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Jesus promised that great things would happen when two people agree together in prayer. Great things also happen when an entire church comes together in prayer. There's another great example of the miraculous effects of corporate prayer in the book of Acts.

1. Read Acts 12:1-17 – King Herod wanted to do something to hurt the church in some way. What did he do in verse 2?
2. Herod noticed that the people were pleased that James was killed. According to verses 3-4, what did he do next?
3. Peter was thrown in prison at the beginning of the days of unleavened bread. Herod was going to take him out of prison at the end of the days of unleavened bread and do whatever the people wanted with him. That was one week, and Peter was probably going to die. According to verse 5, what did the church do while Peter was in prison?
4. How often did they pray for him?
5. The church dropped everything to come together and pray for Peter's release. According to verses 6-7, what happened the night before Peter was to be brought before the people?
6. According to verse 8, did the angel let Peter waste any time in getting out?
7. According to verses 9-10, how far did the angel take Peter before he left Peter alone?
8. What did Peter finally realize in verse 11?

There is no doubt that God displayed His presence and power in Peter's life in response to the prayer of the church. Pray today!

Sunday
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Jesus promised that great things would happen when two people agree together in prayer. Great things also happen when an entire church comes together in prayer. Acts 12 is a great example of the effects of corporate prayer. Let's finish the story today.

1. Peter was imprisoned. The church prayed nonstop for him. He was later released. According to verse 12, what was the first thing he did after being released?
2. According to verse 13, who answered the door when Peter knocked?
3. She was so excited that she left Peter at the door to tell everyone else who was there that night. How did the people react to her news?
4. According to verse 16, what did Peter keep doing this whole time?
5. They finally opened the door for Peter. What was their reaction?
6. Why do you think they reacted the way they did?
7. They were undoubtedly happy for Peter. After he had quieted them down, what did he tell them?
8. What did he instruct the people to do next?

Prayer is powerful; proper corporate prayer is powerful too! Don't be astonished when God answers the fervent prayers of His people. Just give Him the glory that He deserves. Make corporate prayer a priority in your life. When we all do, we will see God do things that are humanly impossible!