

Midweek Study



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The Power of Praying Together

Acts 4:23-31

"No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer – Christians persistently praying for revival." – J. Edwin Orr

When Did These Early Christians Pray? When their backs were against the wall.

- **Man-Centered Prayer** is arrogant, apathetic, and aimless.
- **God-Centered Prayer** is dependent, desperate, and detailed.

How Did These Early Christians Pray?

- **To God as Sovereign Ruler:** They acknowledged God's authority and power over all creation. (Acts 4:24–28)
- **With Specific Requests:** They prayed for boldness and for God to work through them. (Acts 4:29–30)

Why Was Their Prayer Successful?

- **It Was in a Spirit of Unity:** They prayed with one heart and mind (Acts 4:24).
- **It Was Centered on the Word of God:** They quoted Scripture in their prayer (Acts 4:25–28).
- **It Was Specific:** They prayed for boldness and for God to work through them (Acts 4:29–30).
- **It Was Submissive to God's Will:** They sought God's glory, not their own comfort (Acts 4:30).

What Happened When These Early Christians Prayed?

- **The Place Was Shaken, But the People Were Unshaken** (Acts 4:31)
- **They Were Filled with the Spirit and Spoke the Word with Boldness** (Acts 4:31)

Further Observations About Their Prayer

- **Prayer Does Not Undervalue God's Sovereignty:** They acknowledged that everything was happening according to God's purposes (Acts 4:28), but they still prayed boldly for intervention.
- **When Your God is Big, Your Problems Are Small:** The only mention of their problem was, *"Behold their threats"* (Acts 4:29).
- *"The church that prays together, shakes together."* Unified prayer invites God's supernatural power.

When The Church Prays Together, There Will Be A...

1. Dependence on God's Providence

- Acts 4:23 - "And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them."
- The early Christians immediately turned to their spiritual family when they faced persecution. They recognized God's providence in every situation and leaned on one another for strength.
- **Application for Today:** Do you have a spiritual community to turn to during difficulties? Seek fellowship with believers who can encourage and strengthen your faith.

2. Demonstration of God's Presence

- Acts 4:31 - "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken..."
- God powerfully demonstrated His presence in response to their unified prayer. The physical shaking symbolized His approval and encouragement.
- **Application for Today:** Trust that God is present and working, even in the most desperate situations. Pray with faith, expecting Him to move.

3. Desperation for God's Power

- Acts 4:29: "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word..."
- Acts 4:31: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."
- The early believers didn't pray for their problems to disappear. Instead, they prayed for boldness to overcome their challenges and to proclaim the Gospel.
- **Application for Today:** Pray for boldness to stand firm in your faith and to share the Gospel, even in the face of challenges or fear.

4. Determination to Accomplish God's Purpose

- Acts 4:24: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them..."
- Acts 4:30: "...that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."
- The early church prayed with determination to see God glorified through their lives, knowing their purpose was to advance the Gospel.
- **Application for Today:** Align your prayers with God's purpose. Instead of praying for ease, pray for strength to fulfill the tasks He has given you.

John Chrysostom (347-407 AD), the great preacher of Constantinople, described this passage by saying, ***"The whole place was shaken, and that left them all the more unshaken."***