

Praying Like the Early Church

After preaching the gospel resulted in 3,000 converts on Pentecost, the devil began assaulting the church with persecution. The Jewish Council arrests Peter and John for healing a lame man and preaching about Jesus (Acts 4:1-22). These apostles are also threatened and commanded to stop testifying about seeing Jesus raised from the dead.

Peter and John would not be intimidated by their threats. After reporting their experience to the church, they all come together for prayer (Acts 4:23-31).

Prayer plays a huge role in the story of Acts (Acts 2:42; 4:24; 6:6; 12:5; 13:3; 20:36). Consider four lessons from this prayer of the early church.

Prayer must be the first option.

- Prayer was the first thing they did when experiencing a time of crisis (Acts 4:24).
- When experiencing a time of intense persecution, the early saints did not gripe, complain and blame God. They did not walk around with their heads down and quit preaching the gospel.
- Making prayer the first option in difficult times shows trust and dependence in God (1 Peter 5:7). It demonstrates an understanding that we are not self-sufficient and capable of handling our problems on our own.

Prayer must be God-centered.

- This prayer by the early church was not an appeal to God to make their lives easier.
- They acknowledge God as the Creator (Acts 4:24).
- They praise God for not allowing evil men to stop His scheme of redemption (Acts 4:25-28).
- They beg God to take notice of their circumstances and give them the courage to continue doing his work (Acts 4:29-30).
- Our prayers must also be specific and purposeful. They must be loaded with evangelistic requests and appeals for boldness and courage to go through open doors (Colossians 4:3-4).

Prayer must be done with confidence.

- God demands that prayer be done in faith (Mark 11:22-24). He requires that it be done with confidence in His ability to hear and respond.
- The Lord would not have responded to this prayer in such a powerful way if it wasn't done with great confidence (Acts 4:31).
- While praying, we need to trust that the same God who created and sustains all things can also help us endure any challenge we face!

Prayer must often be done with others.

- Jesus often prayed with His disciples (Luke 11:1-4).
- Paul prayed with other Christians (Acts 16:25; 20:36)
- The early church prayed together on numerous occasions for persecuted preachers (Acts 4:24, 31; 12:5). Doing this unites, encourages, and provides an avenue for disciples to bear one another's burdens.
- The prayer of one righteous man accomplishes much (James 5:16). What about the prayer of a group of Christians together?

Conclusion:

Prayer is an amazing privilege given to the children of God. Are you a child of God (Galatians 3:26-29)?