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The Power Of A Praying Church

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-8

Introduction

1. What happens when a church prays?
2. What happens when you and I are continually asking God to accomplish His purposes among us?
3. The truth is, only God knows.
4. Paul told the Christians in Ephesus that God “is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Ephesians 3:20).
5. He told the Christians in Corinth “God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may bound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).
6. When you and I as Christians pray, I believe we open to door for God to accomplish great things through and among us.
7. Today, I want us to stop and consider the power to which we as a congregation have access when we pray.
8. My goal is for each of us to go away from our worship this morning determined to “pray without ceasing,” because we want God to do even more among us.

As we begin our lesson, let’s consider why . . .

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I. It Is Important That We Make Prayer A Priority In Our Lives

A. IT WAS FOR OUR LORD

1. Immediately following His baptism, Jesus was praying when suddenly, “heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased’ ” (Luke 3:21-22).
2. At times, He would get up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and go to a secluded place to pray (Mark 1:35).
3. The historian Luke tells us that Jesus would “often slip away to the wilderness and pray” (Luke 5:16).
4. On another occasion, Luke tells us that “He spent the whole night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12).
5. On the night of His betrayal, Jesus went to one of His favorite places to pray, the Mount of Olives, and there in the Garden of Gethsemane, He spent time alone with His Father (Luke 22:39-44).

2a**B. IT WAS FOR THE APOSTLES AS WELL**

1. They prayed when seeking to determine rather Joseph or Matthias was the best man to replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:24).
2. In the early days of the church in Jerusalem, when a group of widows “were being overlooked in the daily serving of food” (Acts 6:1), the apostles instructed the congregation to select “from among [themselves] seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom [they could] put in charge of this task” (Acts 6:3).
3. The apostles then indicated that they would “devote [themselves] to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).
4. Prior to the resurrection of Tabitha from the dead, Peter went into the room in Joppa where her body lay, “knelt down and prayed” before saying to her,

“Tabitha, arise” (Acts 9:40).

5. In Acts 16, Luke tells us about a time in Philippi when Paul and Silas had been beaten and put in prison — “But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God” (Acts 16:25).
6. I could give you many more examples, but I think you get the picture.
7. You and I are to make prayer a priority in our lives.

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II. The When and Where Of Our Prayers

A. ALL THE TIME

1. Jesus prayed . . .
 - a. In the early hours of the morning, before daylight (Mark 1:35).
 - b. In the evening (Matthew 14:23)
 - c. All night long (Luke 6:12)
2. Peter prayed . . .
 - a. At noon (Acts 10:9)
 - b. At three in the afternoon (Acts 3:1)
3. Paul and Silas prayed at midnight (Acts 16:25).
4. Paul said we should “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
5. Paul isn’t saying that we should pray 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but he is encouraging us to make it our habit to pray whenever we feel the need.
6. As a hymn we sometimes sing instructs us . . .

**Pray in the morning, Pray at the noontime,
Pray in the evening, Pray anytime
Pray when you’re happy, pray when in sorrow,
Pray when you’re tempted, Pray all the time**

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B. EVERYWHERE

1. Jesus prayed . . .
 - a. By a river (Luke 3:21)
 - b. In the wilderness (Luke 5:16)
 - c. On a mountain (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12; 9:28).
 - d. In a garden (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44; Mark 14:35, 39)
2. Peter prayed in the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1) and on a rooftop in Joppa (Acts 10:9).
3. Paul prayed in a prison cell in Philippi (Acts 16:23-25), on a beach at Tyre (Acts 21:5), and in another prison cell in Rome (Ephesians 3:14).
4. Like these men, you and I can pray everywhere:
 - a. In the privacy of our own home or in the middle of a great crowd.
 - b. At school or at work.
 - c. By a river, on a mountain or at our favorite spot in the woods.
5. There are no limits to the places and times we can pray.
6. We are only limited by our desire to pray.

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III. For Whom and For What Should We Pray?

A. EVERYONE

1. Jesus said that we should pray for those who mistreat us (Luke 6:28) and persecute us (Matthew 5:44).
2. He himself prayed for the Roman soldiers who were carrying out His execution: “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

3. In Luke 6:12, the historian Luke tells us of a time when Jesus “went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.”
 - a. At daybreak, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, to be His apostles.
 - b. Do you imagine He spent the night praying for those men whom He would choose? I think so.
4. In Luke 22:32, after telling Peter that Satan had “demanded permission to sift [him] like wheat,” Jesus said, “but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail.”
5. In Acts 6:6, we find the apostles praying for the seven men chosen by the congregation to take care of the needs of the widows.
6. In Acts 12, we find a number of Christians in Jerusalem praying for Peter who was scheduled to be executed by Herod on the following day.
7. In Acts 13, the church prayed for Saul and Barnabas before sending them out on their first missionary journey.
8. The apostle Paul was constantly praying for the Christians in the congregations he had established (2 Corinthians 13:7,9; Ephesians 1:18; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11).
9. In our reading this morning from 1 Timothy 2:1-2, you may remember the apostle Paul wrote, “I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority . . .”
 - a. When Paul wrote this letter, was he thinking about all those men of authority he had encountered during His years of ministry:
 - 1) Gallio — the proconsul of Achaia who had ruled in Paul’s favor when he was accused by the Jews in Corinth (Acts 18:12-16).
 - 2) Claudius Lysias — the Roman centurion who protected him in

Jerusalem (Acts 23:26).

- 3) Felix and Festus — two Roman governors before whom made his defense in Caesarea Maritima (Acts 24:27).
 - 4) King Agrippa — the tetrarch. Another ruler before whom Paul made his defense in Caesarea Maritima (Acts 26)
 - 5) Nero — the emperor of Rome who eventually ordered Paul’s execution.
- b) I believe that Paul prayed not only for these but also for his fellow Jews who were guilty of trying to kill him on more than one occasion.

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.” (Romans 10:1–2, NASB95)

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B. EVERYTHING

1. The salvation of everyone around us (1 Timothy 2:3-4; Romans 10:1)

“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3–4, NASB95)

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” (Romans 10:1, NASB95)

2. Not only do we pray for those who are lost, we are, as Paul writes in Ephesians 6:18, to be constantly “on the alert with all perseverance and petition for the saints,” because we are each seeking “to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).
3. Let us pray that . . .
 - a. the faith of those we love will not fail (Luke 22:32)

- b. **God will keep them from the evil one** (John 17:15).
“I have prayed for you, that your faith will not fail” (Luke 22:32a).
“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one” (John 17:15).
- c. **we will each** “do what is right” (2 Corinthians 13:7).
- d. **we will each** “be steadfast, immovable” **in our faith**, “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).
- e. **we will** “keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment” (HCSB), “so that [we] may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:9,10, NIV84).
- f. “our God will count [us] worthy of [our] calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in [us], and [we] in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, NASB95).

Conclusion

- 1. There are so many more things for which we can and should pray:
 - a. That each of us will finish our days strong in our faith strong, steadfast in our hope, always abounding in our love for the Lord and one another.
 - b. That our young husbands and wives are building a home in which God is first and foremost.
 - c. That our young fathers and mothers are constantly raising their children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
 - d. That our elders may “shepherd” us as the Lord would have them to do.
 - e. That our deacons may serve with sincerity of heart, bringing glory to God in

all they do.

- f. That Kyle and I may each “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5).
- g. That the families of each of these men may be patient, understanding, and encouraging of these men in their work.

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- 2. You and I serve a God who, as I have said over and over again, “is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Ephesians 3:20).
- 3. Let’s not stop thinking about what God wants us to do and become, and let’s continue asking Him to work in our lives bringing about that which pleases Him.
- 4. Let us never forget that this is His church and we are His servants.

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- 5. “To Him be the glory in [this] church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:21).