

Encounter Church
Sunday September 24, 2023

When the Church Prays
The Power of Praying Together

Acts 4:23-31- “As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: “O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying, ‘Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah. “In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.”

THE POWER OF PRAYING TOGETHER: Experiencing the Power!

1. They Gathered

May what brings us together be more powerful than what attempts to divide us!

“As soon as they were freed!” **They returned to the brothers and sisters! They returned to the family!**

THEY WERE CONNECTED! THEY WERE PLANTED! THEY WERE PART OF!

The enemy has been doing his best to cease the gathering of God’s people!

Peter and John didn’t flee for their lives, or separate from their brothers and sisters.

Acts 2:42- “All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.”

Acts 2:46- “They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—“

Acts 4:32- “All the believers were united in heart and mind....”

“There was the melting down of all selfishness and absorbing even the feeling of individuality in an intense and glowing realization of Christian Community!”

THEY GATHERED!

2. They Prayed Together

“all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer”

“they raised their voice to God with one accord” (NKJV)

“they lifted their voices in a wonderful harmony in prayer:” (MSG)

(Illustration)

with one accord- *Being unanimous-having mutual consent, being in agreement, having group unity, having one mind and purpose!*

The members of the Body of Christ responded together by raising their voices, to God in prayer, with one accord.

This is a vivid example of the kind of spiritual unity that results in the lives of those filled with the Holy Spirit.

The effect of persecution was to bind the members of the church together so that there was a common desire to pray!

Luke repeatedly emphasized unity throughout the Book of Acts!

Philippians 2:1-2- “If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends.”

THEY GATHERED! THEY PRAYED TOGETHER! **HERE’S THE KEY**

3. They Prayed God’s Agenda

Before the Day of Pentecost these disciples were all about their own desires. But afterwards, it was all about God’s agenda!

This is one of the most dramatic prayers of the New Testament because it reflects the way the early church prayed!

“O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth,..”

Sovereign Lord-(despotes) literally means “Lord of this House!”

This word is used 10 tens in the New Testament with 3 of those being in prayer!

“O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying, ‘Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah. “In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will.”

They prayed to, 1.The God of Creation. 2.The God of Revelation 3.The God of History.

God you made! God you spoke! God you decided!

When they prayed to the “Lord of the House” the “Lord of the House” influenced their prayers and they prayed God’s Agenda!

In the paradox of human freedom and God’s sovereignty, despite all the raging of humanity, God’s purposes prevail! We are subject to a higher authority!

Therefore, they prayed for boldness and not protection!

“And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Therefore, their prayer was not a prayer for vengeance such as fire from heaven, but for miracles of mercy!

CONCLUSION: They experienced a visible manifestation of God’s presence. A Theophany! The place shook and they were filled wit the Holy Spirit!

Like these early believers, we need to understand that the self-revealed Creator who sent His Son Jesus to the earth to die and rise again for our salvation will give us the courage we need to carry out His agenda today!