

“God, Give Us Hearts to Pray!”

Acts 2:42-47

I. They were devoted...to the prayers.

- A. Devoted: to give yourself with constant, careful attention; to persevere, to be diligent.
 - 1. Not just to prayer, but to “the prayers.”
 - (a) The sentence structure tells us that “the prayers” are together, just like the other three devotions.
 - (b) So, this is referring to corporate prayer.
 - 2. There is a connection between community and the activity of God.
 - 1. Jesus said, “Whenever two or more gather in my Name, there I am in their midst.”
 - 2. He is emphasizing his presence in community.
 - 3. Why? God is a relational God (Trinity).
 - 4. As people made in his image, he calls us to community.
 - 5. One reason why Life Group community is important!
 - 3. How often did they pray?
 - (a) Every day they met together.
 - (b) They prayed together every day.
 - (c) Prayer was a priority.
 - 4. Our culture fills our lives up with busyness.
 - (a) Kid’s sports and activities.
 - (b) Electronics and entertainment.
 - (c) Our own recreational practices.
 - 5. Our pursuit of the “good life” has squeezed corporate prayer out of our lives.
 - (a) Many of us are concerned about our culture.
 - (b) Do we see any connection between lack of prayer and the cultural changes around us?

II. It’s not just the quantity of prayer, but what we pray for.

- A. There is a constant pressure to pray for immediate personal needs.
 - 1. Don’t get me wrong, these things need to be prayer for.
 - (a) They are important because people are important.
 - 2. But if that is all we pray for, something is deeply wrong.
- B. What did they pray for in Acts?
 - 1. They do pray for personal needs. People are healed.
 - 2. But they also pray for the advancement of the mission (Acts 4: 24, 28-31).
 - (a) Even in the face of persecution, it was “God give us boldness.”
 - (b) Help us to speak boldly!
 - (c) God work powerfully!
 - (d) By implication: So, the Gospel will spread with power!
 - 3. As the people of God, we are called to a mission together.
 - (a) “Go and make disciples...”

- (b) Disciples are being transformed toward the image of Christ.
- (c) Spiritual formation is Jesus’ character formed in us.
- 4. That’s what the mission is, but do we pray for it?
 - (a) Do we pray for it corporately?
- 5. A confession: I don’t pray for it enough.
 - (a) The elders don’t pray for it enough.
 - (b) Do you pray for it, for the advancement of the mission?
- 6. Perhaps we need to start with repentance.

III. What do we do? We need balance in our prayers.

- A. Like the Lord’s Prayer
 - 1. Thy kingdom com...give us today our daily bread.”
 - 2. Continue to pray for immediate individual needs.
 - (a) But don’t let that squeeze out prayer for mission.
- B. Wednesday night is no longer prayer night.
 - 1. Corporate prayer needs to happen in Life Groups.
 - (a) Yes, pray for one another’s needs.
 - (b) But also pray for the mission of Good News.
 - (c) Pray for Christ to be formed in group members.
 - (d) Group leaders: remind and lead balanced prayer.
 - 2. Corporate prayer needs to happen in ministry teams.
 - 3. Elders need to be praying for people and for mission.
- C. Prayers for the mission.
 - 1. That the Gospel would advance with power.
 - (a) Like in Acts, pray that we would be bold.
 - (b) Pray that God would soften hard hearts.
 - (c) Pray that we would intentionally seek relationships.
 - 2. That the Gospel would advance in us.
 - (a) Paul prayer for people to know and see Jesus (Ephesians 1:17-18).
 - (b) Paul prayer for faith, love, and spiritual insight (Ephesians 3:14-19).
 - (c) These prayers are the desire of God’s heart for people.
 - (d) Let’s pray these things for one another.
 - 3. Pray for our ministries.
 - (a) Activity without prayer is misplaced faith.
 - (b) It’s trusting that we can do it in our own strength.
 - (c) Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.”
 - (d) Activity covered in prayer is powerful!