

This series is about the foundational elements of our worship services. Why we do what we do as a church? We acknowledge our church as Jesus' church and therefore pattern it after His plan.

**Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

**Everything the disciples did flowed out the Apostles' teaching. The Apostles learned prayer from Jesus.**

**Luke 11:1-4** <sup>1</sup>One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup>He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. <sup>3</sup>Give us each day our daily bread. <sup>4</sup>Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

**Jesus instructed them to teach others what He had taught them.**

**Matthew 28:18-20** <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

## WHY DID THEY PRAY? WHY DO WE PRAY?

### 1. THEY PRAYED OUT OF DEVOTION TO GOD AND TO EACH OTHER.

- We pray to worship and talk *with* God.
  - What we do in private impacts the public; what we do in public impacts the private.
  - Jesus said, "*My house shall be a house of prayer.*" Devotion is loving what God loves.
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### 2. THEY PRAYED TO LISTEN TO AND HEAR FROM GOD.

**Psalms 46:10** Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

- "*Selah*" means pause, reflect, take to heart, ponder.<sup>1</sup> It's used 71 times in Psalms.
  - *Experiencing God*: "If you want to hear from God, you must give the time and effort to cultivate a love relationship with Him."<sup>2</sup> A big part of relationships is listening!
  - Pray, seek God's voice, don't grow impatient. We have to listen to hear.
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### 3. THEY PRAYED OUT OF NECESSITY.

**Acts 4:24-26** <sup>24</sup>When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. <sup>25</sup>You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>26</sup>The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.'"

- They came together to pray, acknowledging the sovereignty, authority and power of God.
- They recognized the battle was ultimately *against Jesus*.

**"I PRAY BECAUSE I'M HELPLESS. I PRAY BECAUSE THE NEED FLOWS OUT OF ME ALL THE TIME, WAKING AND SLEEPING. IT DOESN'T CHANGE GOD. IT CHANGES ME."**<sup>3</sup>

**Acts 12:5** So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

- When we pray while believing God, we shouldn't be surprised when God responds!

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#### 4. THEY PRAYED FOR COURAGE AND BOLDNESS TO SPEAK TRUTHFULLY.

**Acts 4:29-30** <sup>29</sup>Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. <sup>30</sup>Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

**Boldness and courage comes to keep us going when things are hard.**

- Their focus was on God more than on the problem.
- You are most secure when you focus on Jesus and His abilities—not on your own.
- Have faith that God will do what He says He will do.
- Boldness and courage come out of humility, not arrogance.

#### 5. THEY PRAYED FOR HEALING.

**Acts 4:30** Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

**We pray for healing of others, recognizing it is God Who does the healing. Our job is to ask.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray continually, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

**We give thanks in all circumstances, whether God heals the way we ask or not.**

**James 5:14-15** <sup>14</sup>Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

#### ELDER PRAYER THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

When we pray together as a family, we bond as a spiritual community. The fruit of the early church earnestly praying together is our legacy!

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#### QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

**Passages to consider:** Luke 11:1-13, 18:1-8; Acts 4:23-31; Hebrews 4:14-16

1. How did the sermon challenge and encourage you about prayer?
2. Read Luke 18:1-8 and Acts 4:23-31. What are several things Jesus taught His followers about prayer?  
A) What do you see about how Jesus' disciples practiced prayer?
3. How would you explain prayer to someone not familiar with the idea of prayer?  
A) What would you want them to understand about prayer?
4. What has been your experience of praying together with others?  
A) How has it been different than praying alone?      B) Share what has been beneficial (and any challenges).
5. When do you engage in prayer? When do you engage in prayer with others?  
A) What would help you grow in your personal prayer life and *praying with others*?
6. What is God showing you about being devoted together?  
A) How is this series impacting how you engage at services or answering questions you have wondered?

**Next Week: Worship**

**Passages to prepare:** Acts 2:42-47; Hebrew 10:19-25

<sup>1</sup>Find the Greek and Hebrew translations of words in the Bible using Commentaries on BibleHub.com

<sup>2</sup>*Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* by Claude V King and Henry T Blackaby

<sup>3</sup>William Nicholson, *The Movie Shadowlands*, said by the fictional character of C.S. Lewis

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