

Empire Church of the Brethren
Sunday Service Sermons

07 July 2024

Partnership in Prayer

Text: "When he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark' where many were gathered together praying." Acts 12:12

Who is your best partner?

And how do you partner with Him?

How do you partner with anyone?

By talking with them, right?

Talking with God, in your partnership with him, is called prayer.

And we are to be in prayer how often?

The word is translated constant or continually.

The idea being to be always in contact with God.

In our Scripture for today king Herod is arresting and killing the followers of Jesus.

Jesus is dead but his movement is growing.

Herod arrests Peter and chains him up with many guards.

The important verse is *verse 5 of Acts 12*.

"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."

Two words I want to emphasize are: church and earnestly.

The church are the believers in "The Way" that Jesus brought to earth.

And they were praying earnestly.

The word fervent is often used to describe us in prayer.

Both of these words need belief and trust to be effective.

2

Earnest is believing that God can make a difference.

You might use the word sincerely here also.

What was the effect of this praying by the church?

An angel came into the prison, removed the chains and led Peter out of there.

Prayer changes things.

Some scholars think that this is one of the most dramatic stories in the New Testament.

It tells of partnership with God and the power of prayer in the life of a believer.

Herod is the bad guy who is trying to eliminate this new sect.

He is the representative of Satan trying to stop the work of God.

On the other side is the new church following Jesus The Christ.

And it's power is God through prayer.

When ever Satan comes against God, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.

Satan wants to silence the gospel.

God's answer is the mighty power of prayer.

Knowing the principles that are at work in prayer can give us victory over every attempt of Satan to thwart the redemptive purposes of God.

The more we know and believe the more powerful our prayer life will be.

People at prayer.

When Peter was arrested, with killing him as the motive, the new church was at risk.

3

So God responded by drawing together a group of people to pray.

Three classes of people were present at this prayer meeting.

The "Mary" class.

It was the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where they were gathered together praying.

Mary represented the influential people, for it appears that she was a woman of comparative wealth and influence.

She had a roomy home that was used as a meeting place for members of the church in Jerusalem.

Thank God for the Mary's of church history.

Thank God for the Mary's of today who make their homes available for Bible study, prayer and Christian fellowship.

No one can read the New Testament without observing the central place the home has had in the growth of the Christian church.

The "Rhoda" class.

"As Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda."

Rhoda, whose name means rose, represents the less significant people.

Without question she was but a familiar slave who kept the door.

But what a fragrance her name and life have given the Christian church throughout the centuries.

While God certainly uses the influential people, he never despises the less significant people.

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The prayers of Rhoda were just as effective and acceptable as the prayers of Mary.

The "many" class.

We read that many were gathered together praying.

The many represent the inconspicuous people.

These are the unnamed, common people who hear Jesus gladly, who respond to his message, and who become the members of his church, which is the body.

Since the beginning of the church and down through the centuries, the preponderance of the people in the church of Jesus Christ have been part of the "many" class, and this is how it will be until the church is complete and Christ comes back to receive his own.

The purpose in prayer.

In this account by Luke we see two elements of prayer.

One is unity in prayer.

We see in the beginning of the movement of Jesus that the believers held things in common and were constantly in prayer.

Here we see the unity of the church in prayer.

No matter their differences they were united in prayer.

That is what I call us to each Sunday during our prayer time.

No matter our differences we can unite in our love for each other and our belief in God and intercede in behalf of each other.

This is the first secret of prevailing prayer.

5

This is why Jesus said, "If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."

And in *Psalms 133* we find that it is good and pleasant for people to dwell together in unity, for there God pours out the precious ointment of his Spirit and distills the dew of his blessing.

Another is urgency in prayer.

Prayer was made without ceasing.

The phrase without ceasing means that prayer was fervent and intense.

It is prayer of self-denial.

When people are gathered to pray with this sense of urgency, they are also prepared to go through with God at any cost.

This is Calvary praying; therefore, it is victorious praying.

When people pray like this, something is bound to happen.

The power of prayer.

Peter had been cast into prison.

Previous to this James had been beheaded with the sword.

The Christians were apprehensive, so they prayed and they prayed and they prayed.

Praying is not the only thing we can do, it is the best thing we can do.

God has so ordered it that the miracles that happen on earth are always channeled through prayer, and this case was no exception.

6

The power of God was revealed.

First there was an unusual demonstration of power.

When Rhoda reported that Peter was alive and was standing outside the door, the ones who had been praying claimed she was wrong.

Without doubt, everyone imagined that Peter would be arraigned before the magistrate the next day and then cautioned and released, all in answer to their prevailing prayers.

But God always works far above all that we could ever ask or imagine.

Therefore, the divine demonstration of power transcended the preconceived ideas of these faithful prayer warriors.

Second, there was an undeniable demonstration of power.

“Peter stood before the gate”.

However unusual the answer was, it was undeniable.

Everyone in that fellowship knew that God had answered prayer and that prayer was a miracle-working force.

God has the power to do whatever he wants to do.

When God hears prayer, the answer is both unusual and undeniable.

The question for today is: are you involved in this partnership of prayer?

7

God is looking for the Marys, the Rhodas, and the many who will learn the purpose of prayer and experience its unusual and undeniable power.

Will you be such a person today?

Do you not see the great need of the hour to unlock the iron gates that imprison those of our own generation?

Will you not enlist in this great partnership of prayer today?

Not only is God the best partner you can have, he is the only partner who knows your future and your destiny.

Surrender and let God bring you into his kingdom here like it is in heaven.