**“They Raised Their Voice to God with One Accord”**

*The Power of Communal Prayer*

*Acts 4:24*

**Introduction**

1. Throughout scripture, men and women of faith are characterized as people of prayer.
	1. They rely upon God’s revelations to guide them through life in faithfulness.
	2. They rely upon God’s ears to hear their cries and pleas – **Psalm 34:15**
2. The Lord’s people banded together in prayer often to call upon their God to aid them in Hiss service – **Acts 4:24**
3. Prayer is a powerful tool the Lord has left at our disposal, and we should use it faithfully, and we should use it together.
4. The Presuppositions to Prayer
5. We are Impotent People in Need
	1. Men are finite, ignorant, and powerless – **Psalm 39:4-6**
	2. We cannot direct ourselves – **Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12**
	3. **1 Kings 3:7** – when God offered Solomon anything he requested, Solomon first reflected on his own inadequacy.
6. We Have a Personal, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnibenevolent God
	1. Prayer must be addressed to a person – **cf. 1 Kings 18:26-29** – prophets of Baal and Elijah’s mockery.
		1. **Psalm 115:1-8** – God contrasted with idols.
		2. Prayer is not effective as a mere psychological exercise, or as some appeal to the impersonal energies of the universe.
		3. **Effective prayer appeals to the personal Creator God.**
	2. **Isaiah 40:27-31** – the people in captivity are answered with a reminder of God’s awareness, understanding, ability, compassion, and goodwill – any delay is not evidence of supposed ignorance, indifference, or inability – God knows what is best, and can provide what is best.
	3. **Psalm 136:1-3, 23-26** – God is supremely good, powerful, and directs such toward His creation, especially His people.
7. We are People of Faith
	1. Prayer does not represent our will being demanded on God, but our will humbly seeking His – **1 John 5:14-15**
		1. **This stems from the previous 2 presuppositions – if we are feeble, needy people, and God is not only powerful, but knows exactly what we need, and wants us to have it, then we must not chafe at the responses He gives to our prayer, or cunningly word our prayers so as to generate a desired answer, but humbly ask for His will and accept it.**
	2. Jesus reflected the character of true, unadulterated prayer – **Matthew 26:39; Hebrews 5:7-8**
8. The Principles of Prayer
9. Privilege
	1. Children of God
		1. Jesus’ model prayer – **Matthew 6:9**
			1. What manner of love – **1 John 3:1**
			2. Spirit of adoption – **Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 4:6-7**
		2. A High Priest over God’s household – **Hebrews 3:1, 6; 4:14-16** – ability to come to the throne in boldness due to our High Priest.
	2. The Righteous
		1. The man born blind – **John 9:31** – not inspired but speaks truth and reason.
			1. **Proverbs 28:9** – the prayer of the rebellious is an abomination.
			2. **1 Peter 3:7** – sinful activity will hinder prayer.
		2. Prayer is a privilege of fellowship, and only open to the righteous – **1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 3:22**
		3. A repentant sinner seeks fellowship by God’s faithfulness and justice – **1 John 1:9**
10. Persistence
	1. Prayer is not an exercise of instant gratification, but of faith.
	2. The Lord’s omniscience and omnibenevolence may result in a negative answer, or a delay, but those of faith persist – **Luke 18:1-8** – the persistent widow.
		1. To cease in prayer is to fail in faith.
	3. Prayer is a priority in the life of God’s children – **Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Matthew 7:7**
11. Power
	1. When prayer is offered by those who belong to God, those who are faithful, it is extremely powerful – **James 5:13-18** – elders, saved, forgiven, prayer of a righteous man.
	2. **2 Corinthians 1:8-11** – their prayer was a help, contributing to Paul’s deliverance by God’s grace.
	3. The power of prayer does not lie within the quality or quantity of the words (**cf. Matthew 6:7**), but within the One who is petitioned.
12. Providence
	1. Prayer does not work miracles. It petitions God to move, and God moves as He wills.
		1. For a time, God worked in miracles, and prayer petitioned Him to do so – **Matthew 17:19, 21** (man with a demon-possessed son)
		2. Elijah’s prayer did not effect a miracle, but an act of nature – **1 Kings 18:44-45** (growing storm); **James 5:17** (nature like ours)
	2. Providence – to see before (with intent to supply need, or act accordingly, attend to) – **Matthew 6:33**
		1. God is the creator of the material universe and is active in it.
		2. He can act according to its laws, and answer prayers, utilizing people, events, circumstances, etc. – **Colossians 4:2-4**
13. The Presence of Prayer with God’s People
14. A Praying Church
	1. The disciples waited in Jerusalem for the Promise of the Father and prayed – **Acts 1:14** – they anticipated the kingdom.
	2. The lofty apostolic office warranted prayer for God’s guidance in the choice – **Acts 1:23-26** – replacing Judas Iscariot.
	3. The newly established church was steadfast in prayer – **Acts 2:42**
	4. Context of Peter and John healing the lame man – **Acts 3:1** – in the temple to pray.
	5. First signs of persecution did not stifle the church, but emboldened them in prayer – **Acts 4:24, 31**
	6. Peter and James in prison, James killed, the church prayed for Peter – **Acts 12:5, 12** – they were still praying when he was released.
	7. Prayer in sending evangelists on their journey – **Acts 13:2-3** – prayer for the work of the church.
	8. Prayer in appointing elders – **Acts 14:23**
	9. Prayer in turmoil – **Acts 16:25**
	10. Paul prayed with the Ephesian elders after exhorting them to give heed to themselves and the flock among them – **Acts 20:36-38**
	11. After the Spirit prophesied about trouble for Paul in Jerusalem, the brethren prayed for him – **Acts 21:4-6** – the disciples, a local church, inclusion of women and children
15. The Power of Communal Prayer
	1. What significance is there, if any, in praying together? – congregational prayer.
	2. Fellowship – **Acts 2:42**
		1. **Fellowship** – the joint participation in spiritual matters.
		2. These were all people who had just realized the long-anticipated blessings of the Messianic Kingdom – they were made a part of God’s true people, spiritual Israel – they eagerly partook together in the spiritual feast.
		3. **(v. 46)** – they continued daily with one accord in spiritual focus, including prayer.
	3. Unity – **Acts 4:24**
		1. The apostles did not hear the threat, and isolate to pray, but they banded together.
		2. Their unity of purpose in Christ had been opposed, but it would persist through the unity prayer.
		3. **One accord** – *homothymadon* – from homos, “same,” thumos, “mind” (VINE)
			1. “with one mind/purpose/impulse” (BDAG)
		4. **(vv. 29-30)** – promotes the unity of the Spirit through petitioning God that His will would be done through His willing servants.
	4. Edification – **1 Corinthians 14:13-17**
		1. Paul speaks of edification through prayer.
		2. Not mere education, but the building up of the inner man through the activity of communing with God.
		3. Joining others in prayer engages the mind in careful thought, hanging on each word to determine the content of the petition, and making it our own – **(vv. 16-17)**
		4. Building up through raying in the Holy Spirit – **Jude 20-21** – according to the will of God, for the will of God, with the language of God’s will.
	5. Expressed and cultivated love – **Romans 15:30-33**
		1. ***“through the love of the Spirit”*** – the love the Spirit cultivates in brethren for each other leads to supplications on behalf of each other.
		2. Prayer for others is a display of tender love – **Acts 20:36-38**
	6. Vigilance – **Ephesians 6:10-13, 18**
		1. To top off the panoply of God, Paul placed prayer as a priority in the spiritual warfare.
		2. When we pray together for protection from the advances of our spiritual adversary, we not only call upon the One able to deliver us, but heighten each other’s awareness, and stimulate each other’s sensitivities to every individual’s need for God’s strength.

**Conclusion**

1. As we seek to pattern ourselves after the New Testament church, we must not make prayer an exception to that focus.
2. It is important that we are organized as they were, that we work as they work, and worship as they worshipped. Included in this pattern is the consistent practice of communicating with God as individuals, and collectively as a body.