

**Prayer Week**  
***Why Pray Together?***  
**January 9, 2011**  
**Scripture Reading - Acts 12:1-19**

**Desperate Times Require Desperate Measures**

The early church was facing a crisis in Acts 12

- **Acts 12:5 (ESV)**  
<sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.
- **Acts 12:12 (ESV)**  
<sup>12</sup> When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

This wasn't the first time they'd responded this way

- **Acts 4:18 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup> So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.
- **Acts 4:23-29 (ESV)**  
<sup>23</sup> When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said...<sup>29</sup> ...Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,...

But it wasn't just crisis that brought them together to pray

- **Acts 1:8 (ESV)**  
<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- **Acts 1:14 (ESV)**  
<sup>14</sup> All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer,...
- **Acts 2:42 (ESV)**  
<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers...

We too are facing a crisis as a church

- The three year window
  - o Churches 0 to 3 – 3 people to reach one for Christ
  - o Churches 10 and older – 89 people to reach one for Christ
- The 85

But like the early church, we don't want crisis to be the only thing that brings us together to pray

### **Three reasons to pray together regularly**

- 1) Praying together is encouraging - Doing anything with other believers is a blessing, but it's a special blessing to pray
  - a. You're going to war together for God
    - i. **Ephesians 6:10-13 (ESV)**  
<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.
    - ii. **Ephesians 6:18-20 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.
  - b. God ministers powerfully to you through the prayers of others

- i. Fires you up, breaks you down, brings comfort, teaches you
  - c. Bonds you together in a special way
    - i. You really get to know someone when you pray with them because you hear their heart
      - 1. Men's prayer / Women's prayer
      - 2. MG's
  - d. You can feel the presence of God in a special way
    - i. Often prayer meetings end with thanksgiving for God's presence
    - ii. **Matthew 18:20 (ESV)**  
<sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

It had to have been a huge encouragement for the believers in Acts 12 to come together and pray for Peter.

2) Praying together is powerful - If the prayers of one of God's children are powerful, how much more powerful are the prayers of many of His children?

a. **James 5:17-18 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup>Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

b. **Acts 12:5-11 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup>So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. <sup>6</sup>Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. <sup>7</sup>And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. <sup>8</sup>And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." <sup>9</sup>And he went out and followed him. He

did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. <sup>10</sup> When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. <sup>11</sup> When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

c. **Acts 4:29-31 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup> while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." <sup>31</sup> And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

d. **Acts 2:1-4 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

e. **Acts 2:47 (ESV)**

<sup>47</sup> ...And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

f. Brooklyn Tabernacle, South Korea

g. The 30 / 30 hours of prayer / amazing baptism service

h. Bert's dilemma

i. My friend's miracle this fall

What would happen if all of us started praying together for the 85?

3) Praying together brings glory to God

a. **Acts 12:12-16 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary,

the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. <sup>13</sup> And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. <sup>14</sup> Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. <sup>15</sup> They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" <sup>16</sup> But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, *they saw him and were amazed.*

b. **Revelation 7:9-12 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" <sup>11</sup> And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

**Let's commit to praying together in 2011**

- Current opportunities
  - o The main one is Sunday mornings
  - o Others include
    - T ad Th mornings
    - Ministry groups
    - Special prayer events – Prayer Week, 30 hours
- Feel free to start more!!!

**3 barriers to praying together**

- Fear
- Selfishness
- Lack of faith

