

The Marks of a Praying Church

Prayer carried by a handful of intercessors but that does not make you a praying church. In this sermon I will outline 9 core characteristics of a praying church and propose some shifts that are necessary to take the prayer life of local churches to another level. is one of those Christian disciplines that is taught a lot but practised little. It's one thing to have a few prayer meetings

We can begin to call ourselves a praying church when:

1. We pray for extended periods individually.

Jesus prayed individually:

Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Daniel was committed in his individual discipline of prayer despite persecution:

Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Peter, who had struggled with prayer in Gethsemane became committed to prayer:

Acts 10:9-10 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

Paul did not have an average prayer life:

1 Cor 14:18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

2. We pray for extended periods corporately.

Acts 12:5-7,12-15 5So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was fervently praying to God for him. On the night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, with sentries standing guard at the entrance to the prison. 7Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists....12And when he had realized this, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered together and were praying. 13He knocked at the outer gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. 14When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that she forgot to open the gate, but ran inside and announced, "Peter is standing at the gate!" 15"You are out of your mind," they told her. But when she kept insisting it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

Mt 26:40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.

Acts 2:41-43 (BSB) Those who embraced his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to the believers that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs....

3. Our Church is a collective watchman

Acts 4:23-31 23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 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. 25 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? 26 The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one. 27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

4. The majority of the church is involved in some form of prayer

Joel 2:15 -17 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. 16 Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber.17 Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

1 Tim 2:8 (ERV) I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing.

5. Our church leadership is actively involved in prayer

Acts 6:3-4(BSB) ...3Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men confirmed to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will appoint this responsibility to them 4and will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

6. God is glorified in all our prayer meetings

Ps 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

7. The content of our prayer meetings is outworked practically

8.

Acts 13:1-3 1Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

9. Our prayer meetings are characterized by brokenness and repentance

2 Chron 7:14 If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Grace is released when we humble ourselves.

Neh 1:4-7 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. 5 Then I said: “Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you. 7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

10. We call a corporate fast from time to time.

We saw earlier that when they were at Antioch fasting and praying it was in that context that Paul and Barnabas were sent out. (Acts 13:1-3)

Esther 4:16 - 5:2 "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." [a] 17 Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him. 5 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace. 2 And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.