

The Power of Corporate Prayer

What?

What is corporate prayer?

2 Ch 5:11-14 NIV

"The priests then withdrew from the Holy Place. All the priests who were there had consecrated themselves, regardless of their divisions. All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God."

Unified prayer and worship, praise and thanksgiving allow us to experience the Presence of God in a greater way. The Holy Spirit often moves in hearts and lives in these environments.

Mat 16:18 NKJV

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Joe 1:14 AMP

"Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land in the house of the Lord, your God, and cry to the Lord [in penitent pleadings]."

Acts 2:42 TPT

Every believer was faithfully devoted to following the teachings of the apostles. Their hearts were mutually linked to one another, sharing communion and coming together regularly for prayer.

Act 4:24 NLT

"When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— ..."

Corporate prayer is a gathering of believers who lift up their voices to God in unity, in repentance, in all manner of prayer and in worship.

Why?

Why do I need to come to pray with other people, when I can pray on my own at home and God still hears my prayer?

1. Because Jesus calls His house a house of prayer for all nations.

Isa 56:7 NIV

"these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Mar 11:15-17 NKJV

"So, they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS'? But you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.'"

Jesus calls His house a house of prayer. He doesn't call it a house of entertainment. He doesn't call it a house of motivation. He doesn't call it a house of preaching. He doesn't even call it a house of healing. He calls it a house of prayer. That means that it is characterized by prayer. Everything else comes out of prayer. This is critical.

2. Because the early church in Acts models this.

"...the book of Acts reveals that the early church was serious about praying together. They prayed together in the temple and in their homes, when they were sick and when they were filled with the Spirit, at mealtimes and in times of persecution. Again and again we find them all together, devoting themselves to prayer. As our local churches take up valuable projects in the places where we live and work, we must not neglect that most vital work that undergirds everything we do." Megan Hill

Act 4:24-31 NLT

"When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness."

3. Because we are instructed in the New Testament epistles to do so.**Heb 10:24-25 NLT**

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another,"

1Ti 2:8 NLT

"In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy."

The word for place is talking about geographical location. They met a lot house-to-house.

The word for men here in the Greek, indicates men specifically. So prayer is for men.

1 Co 14:26 NLT

"Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you."

Meeting together is a given in Paul's mind. "When you meet", not "if you meet".

1 Co 5:4 NIV

"So, when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,"

Rom. 15:30 NIV

"Brothers and sisters, I am asking you through the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray for me with the love the Holy Spirit provides."

4. To maximize on the power of agreement

Mat 18:19 NKJV

"Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."

Lev 26:8 NKJV

"Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you."

Act 12:5-9, 11 NLT

"But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him. The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered. So, Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening.....Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent His angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!"

- There are certain breakthroughs that only occur with corporate prayer e.g. battering ram, e.g. imagery of warfare in old days. One archer? Multiple archers?

5. To assist with unity

True agreement is built upon unity.

Acts 2:42 TPT

Every believer was faithfully devoted to following the teachings of the apostles. Their hearts were mutually linked to one another, sharing communion and coming together regularly for prayer.

Php 2:1-2 NKJV

"Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

Lk. 22:39-46 Nlrv

"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives. His disciples followed him. When they reached the place, Jesus spoke. "Pray that you won't fall into sin when you are tempted," he said to them. Then he went a short distance away from them. There he got down on his knees and prayed. He said, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup of suffering away from me. But do what you want, not what I want." An angel from heaven appeared to Jesus and gave him strength. Because he was very sad and troubled, he prayed even harder. His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. After that, he got up from prayer and went back to the disciples. He found them sleeping. They were worn out because they were very sad. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up! Pray that you won't fall into sin when you are tempted.""

6. To bring about great deliverance

- Paul

2 Co 1:10-11 NLT

"And He did rescue us from mortal danger, and He will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in Him, and He will continue to rescue us. And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety."

- Peter

Act 12:5-9, 11 NLT

"But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him. The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered. So, Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening.....Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent His angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!"

7. For protection

Ezr. 8:21-23 NLT

"And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We prayed that He would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we travelled. For I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to accompany us and protect us from enemies along the way. After all, we had told the king, "Our God's hand of protection is on all who worship Him, but His fierce anger rages against those who abandon Him." So, we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and He heard our prayer."

- Are there prayers you are praying individually, that you should be praying corporately?

8. To experience an increase in the prophetic and in angelic activity in our midst

Act 12:7-11 NLT

"Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered. So, Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So, they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him. Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent His angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!"

9. To bring healing

2 Ch 7:14 AMP

"If My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves, pray, seek, crave, and require of necessity My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."

Jas 5:16 NLT

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."

10. To learn from others

- Mary learned something about prayer from Hannah.

Lk. 1:46-55 NKJV

"And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.""

1 Sa 2:1-10 NKJV

"And Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation. "No one is holy like the LORD, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God. "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the LORD is the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed. "The bows of the mighty men are broken, and those who stumbled are girded with strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, And the hungry have ceased to hunger. Even the barren has borne seven, and she who has many children has become feeble. "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory. "For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, And He has set the world upon them. He will guard the feet of His saints, But the wicked shall be silent in darkness. "For by strength no man shall prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; From heaven He will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. "He will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed.""

- Saul (Paul) likely learned something about prayer from Stephen.

Act 7:54-8:1 NKJV

"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

- Jesus taught His disciples after they were together in prayer.

Lk. 11:1 NKJV

"Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.""

And He gave them an example.

Mat 6:9-15 NKJV

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

- Jesus took some of His disciples and went up on a mountain and prayed

Lk. 9:28 NKJV

"Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray."

- Paul assumes we will meet together with a goal mutual edification

1 Co 14:26 NLT

"Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you."

- Jesus shows us that we need corporate prayer to stretch us in our personal prayer

Lk. 22:39-46 NlrV

"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives. His disciples followed him. When they reached the place, Jesus spoke. "Pray that you won't fall into sin when you are tempted," he said to them. Then he went a short distance away from them. There he got down on his knees and prayed. He said, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup of suffering away from me. But do what you want, not what I want." An angel from heaven appeared to Jesus and gave him strength. Because he was very sad and troubled, he prayed even harder. His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. After that, he got up from prayer and went back to the disciples. He found them sleeping. They were worn out because they were very sad. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up! Pray that you won't fall into sin when you are tempted."

11. To hear from God

1 Co 14:26 NLT

"Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you."

1 Co 13:9 NKJV

"For we know in part and we prophesy in part."

1 Co 14:40 NKJV

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

The importance of interdependence:

- Prophetic drafting (e.g. drafting in cycling; pelotons add in some stats)
- Each of us see a part

The Lord speaks to us in our corporate gatherings:

In 2 Chronicles chapter 20 we find the Moabites and Ammonites coming to war against Jehoshaphat.

2 Ch 20:3-6 NKJV

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So, Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?"

He continues praying with the people. This was what happened after the prayer:

2 Ch 20:14-17 NKJV

"Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah,.... in the midst of the assembly. And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.'"

- The Lord ministers to their immediate emotional needs
- The Lord uncovers the position of the enemy
- The Lord gives them the strategy and battle plan
- The Lord encourages them

This is all in response to the prayer in the corporate gathering.

What would have happened if they hadn't gathered, fasted and prayed?

How?

How should we pray in corporate prayer?

Mat 6:7-8 NKJV

"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. "Therefore, do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

Acts 1:12-14 TPT

The disciples left the Mount of Olives and returned to Jerusalem, less than a mile away. Arriving there, they went into a large second-floor room to pray. Those present were Peter, John, Jacob, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, Jacob (the son of Alpheus), Simon (the zealot), Judas (the son of Jacob), and a number of women, including Mary, Jesus' mother. His brothers were there as well. All of them were united in prayer, gripped with one passion, interceding night and day.

Acts 2:42 TPT

Every believer was faithfully devoted to following the teachings of the apostles. Their hearts were mutually linked to one another, sharing communion and coming together regularly for prayer.

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When?

When should we be in corporate prayer? And how much is enough?

Acts 1:12-14 TPT

The disciples left the Mount of Olives and returned to Jerusalem, less than a mile away. Arriving there, they went into a large second-floor room to pray. Those present were Peter, John, Jacob, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, Jacob (the son of Alpheus), Simon (the zealot), Judas (the son of Jacob), and a number of women, including Mary, Jesus' mother. His brothers were there as well. All of them were united in prayer, gripped with one passion, interceding night and day.

Act 5:42 NLT

"And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah.""

Isa 62:6-7 NKJV

"I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

- Ignite is not enough. It is wonderful. It is extended. But its not enough and that's why we have more prayer meetings starting up. We want to be aligned to scripture.
- Many times we want NT power, but don't embrace NT lifestyle. NT lifestyle is one of prayer.

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Where?

Where can we have corporate prayer?

1. In our homes

Act 2:42 NLT

"All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer."

Acts 2:42 TPT

Every believer was faithfully devoted to following the teachings of the apostles. Their hearts were mutually linked to one another, sharing communion and coming together regularly for prayer.

Act 5:42 NLT

"And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah.""

Household prayer is an important act of both hospitality and evangelism.

19th century minister theologian J. W. Alexander wrote: "We are, perhaps, ready enough to make our guests welcome, to provide for their lodging and refreshment, to show them the wonders of our environs, and to invite friends for their entertainment; but, besides this, we owe a duty to their souls."

"When we include our guests in our times of family prayer, we provide for their spiritual needs. If they are fellow-believers, our prayers will be an encouragement to them, welcoming them into the spiritual life of our home. If they are non-Christians, our prayers can stand as a testimony before them, pointing them to the one who is Lord of our home. Who knows but that because of our household prayers, we may one day find past dinner guests seated beside us at the wedding supper of the Lamb?" Megan Hill

- Are you maximizing on your times when you are together
- Some of you watch soccer together, why don't you add 15 minutes before or after the match and pray together? Some of you will be watching the Man U vs Liverpool match later... why don't you meet 10 mins earlier and pray together (and not just for your team)

- Some of you train together, why don't you spend a few minutes together afterwards and pray together?

2. In our Church venues

Act 5:42 NLT

"And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah.""

Acts 2:42 TPT

Every believer was faithfully devoted to following the teachings of the apostles. Their hearts were mutually linked to one another, sharing communion and coming together regularly for prayer.

Heb. 10:24-25 NLT

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another,"

3. In any place we agree to meet and pray together

Lk. 9:28 NKJV

"Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray."

Hindrances to Corporate Prayer

Sometimes we avoid corporate prayer because:

- We don't like the style of the prayer leader
- Self-consciousness (it's easier praying on my own)
- It's not comfortable
- It's not convenient
- Independence (linked to pride) – we want to pray our own stuff as opposed to what's on the prayer leader's list.

These are some of the things that may block corporate prayer. Just want to encourage you to not let any of these stop you.

Corporate prayer assumes individual prayer is happening. Let's build Jesus' house, which is a house of prayer.

Conclusion

Corporate prayer is a gathering of believers who lift up their voices to God in unity, in repentance, in all manner of prayer and in worship. Corporate prayer is important and not an added optional extra alongside multiple church programs and meetings. It is fundamental. It is the core of the church Jesus is building. Jesus called His house a "house of prayer". A distinctive characteristic of His church, therefore, is that it is a praying and prayerful church. Whose house are we building, if it's not a house of prayer? We have to follow the blueprint for God's house as set out by the Wise Master builder Himself!

At the end of the day, corporate prayer is as much for our own benefit as it is for the people and things we pray for. We see it modelled in the book of Acts by the early church and we hear Paul instructing us around it. We read of great deliverances, healings, prophetic encounters, angelic visitations, miracles, and signs and wonders occurring in response to the prayers of the saints. Along with this, we see people learning, growing, being encouraged and hearing God as they engage in prayer with other believers.

Let us not neglect to pray corporately, in our homes, workplaces, in church, wherever we can and trust God for Him to build His kingdom and church.

References

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