

THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE PRAYING CHURCH

AUGUST 17, 2025

SCRIPTURE

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. 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. 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? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against His anointed one.' 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. They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable Your servants to speak Your word with great boldness. Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." 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. Acts 4:23-31

PROTECTIVE & PROACTIVE

Christians are at war! We are being knocked down and we are knocking down!

"I will build My church (proactive), and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (protective)."
Matthew 16:18

David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 1 Samuel 17:48

Hezekiah removed the high places, **smashed** the sacred stones and **cut down** the Asherah poles. 2 Kings 18:4

The Son of Man **came to destroy** the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8

"I have not come to bring peace, **but a sword**." Matthew 10:34

Though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does. We use God's mighty weapons...to knock down...strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:3

My aim isn't to call for unruly aggression, but for balance!

Notice: After Peter's release, the Church didn't pray for protection, but for boldness!

PRAYER STRENGTHED THE EARLY CHURCH

1/ The early church responded with prayer.

"Prayer is our first response, not our last resort." Justin Smith

Acts 1: The Church prayed for the Holy Spirit.
Acts 4: The Church prayed for boldness.
Acts 8: The Church prayed for the Spirit's infilling.
Acts 13: The Church prayed and sent missionaries.
Acts 20 & 21: The Church prayed as Paul left.

Acts 2: The Church was devoted to prayer.
Acts 6: The Church prayed and appointed leaders.
Acts 12: The Church prayed for Peter's release.
Acts 16: The Church prayed while in prison.
Acts 27: The Church prayed while shipwrecked.

2/ The early church recognized their inability.

3/ The early church recognized God's ability.

4/ The early church requested mighty things.

"Bold prayers honor God, and God honors bold prayers." Mark Batterson

PRAYER STRENGTHS THE MODERN CHURCH

1/ The Church should pray as we gather.

"God, grant us a love and a unity that is uncommon."

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as You and I are one. **May they experience such perfect unity** that the world will know that You sent Me and that You love them as much as You love Me." John 17:20-23

May love live and insecurities die. May care thrive and gossip not survive.

"Lord, root out those who would be divisive and plant those who would strengthen."

"Father, establish life-long friendships."

2/ The Church should pray as we glorify.

"Holy Spirit, fall afresh!"

"Jesus, give us a greater revelation of You!"

"Father, send us new songs from this house."

Worship is wonder. It is also a type of warfare. Remember the torment of King Saul.

3/ The Church should pray as we grow.

"Holy Spirit, pour out the anointing on our ministers."

"God, cause our church to grow in knowledge, understanding, and experience."

"Lord, help us fulfill the purposes of God in our generation."

The Church stands in the gap between what is and what could be. This is "intercession."

4/ The Church should pray as we give.

"God, send us volunteers to serve in the church."

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest...to send out workers into His harvest field." Matthew 9:37-38

"Holy Spirit, awaken spiritual gifts that are dormant."

"Father, open the windows of heaven over the people of God and the house of God!"

5/ The Church should pray as we go.

"God, turn our complacent hearts into courageous hearts!"

I didn't shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know. Acts 20:27

"Jesus, give us focus and determination to reach the lost."

"If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms around their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled...let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for." Charles H. Spurgeon

We need to develop a "Whatever It Takes" mentality.

Prayer can be like snow accumulating on a mountain. In time, it becomes an avalanche.

"Father, breathe upon our efforts!"

BECOMING NASHERITES

Nothing is accomplished in the Church without prayer. Nothing.