

Theme: Prayer is the powerful tool that God has given us to see His work in the world (and in us) brought to fruition. God uses our prayers to support every aspect of the work of the church.

Background & Introduction: Today we look at one of the pillars that support and empower our core values: prayer. This will be a practical primer on prayer, not a theological treatise.

I. The Place of Prayer

A. A precious gift

1. God's Divine Decree

- "...All things come to pass immutably, and infallibly;"
- God declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10)
- So...Why should we pray?

2. Accomplished through human agency (prayer)

- God has ordained, decreed the means as well as the ends.
- Our prayers matter! (2 Chronicles 7:14)

B. With God's promise

- God hears (Psalm 65:2)
- He answers (1 Samuel 1:11 & 20)
- Draws near to those who pray (Psalm 145:18)
- Prayers are able to accomplish much (James 5:16)
- Reveals much (Jeremiah 33:3)
- Delivers from trouble (Psalm 50:15)

C. For the believer

1. In private (Matthew 6:6)

- Westminster Larger Catechism, Questions 184/185

2. In public

D. And the whole church

- Day of corporate confession (Nehemiah 9; Joel 1:14; Esther 4:16)

II. The Power of Prayer

A. Personal prayer

1. Old Testament examples

- 2 Kings 6:17; 2 Kings 19:15-29
- The Psalms!

2. New Testament examples

a. Acts 10

- Cornelius at prayer
- Peter at prayer

b. Acts 16:25

B. Corporate prayer

1. Church birth (Acts 1:14)

- With one accord
- Devoted to prayer

2. Church growth

- They continued in prayer (Acts 2:42; 4:24; 12:5 & 12)

NOTE: Will God move and act in response to concerted, corporate prayer today?

III. The Practice of Prayer

- A. The invitation
 - Psalm 62:8
 - John 16:23
- B. The instruction
 - Colossians 4:2
 - Romans 12:12
- C. The encouragement
 - 1. Pray!
 - 2. Join others in prayer

Conclusion: If we truly desire to see God exalted in worship, if we would see the body of Christ loving one another such that the world around us stands up and takes notice, if our witness is to pierce the darkness of this present generation, if our children are going to rise up and bless us because we set the truth before them, if we are going to love and serve as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her - it will be because we are a people who pray.