



When the Early Church Prayed

Selected Acts Passages
Sunday, January 15, 2017

1. The Early Church prayed REGULARLY.

(3:1; 10:9, 30; 22:17)

2. The Early Church prayed in TRIALS.

(9:11; 12:5; 16:25; 27:29)

3. The Early Church prayed for PEOPLE.

(8:15; 9:40; 12:5; 28:8; 21:4-6)

4. The Early Church prayed for LEADERSHIP.

(6:6; 13:3; 20:36)

5. The Early Church prayed for the GOSPEL MISSION.

(1:14, 24; 4:23-31; 13:1-3)

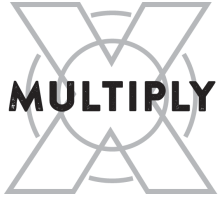
Last week we saw HOW the Early Church prayed. This week we look at the occasions WHEN the Early Church prayed. Here's a second selection of the 32 references to prayer in the book of Acts . . .

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:21-23)

Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. (Acts 16:23-26)

Now from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials . . . And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship. (Acts 20:17-19, 36-38)

And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. (Acts 21:4-6)



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Growth Group Guide & Questions
for the week of January 15

Connecting & Caring Together (about 20 min.)

We often talk about Growth Groups in terms of “doing life together” and so our caring for one another is a critical part of our time together. As our Winter Quarter begins, take time to connect. One idea is to share personal “highs & lows” from the holidays. Another idea is to share one goal/dream/vision/resolution you hope to see happen in 2017.

Grappling with God's Word Together (about 20 min.)

1. Read through the selected prayer passages from Acts on the backside of this sheet together as a group. What have been your thoughts and reactions to our study of prayer in the Early Church? What has been new, challenging or intriguing?
2. In these messages, we've acknowledged together the challenge and struggle of prayer. Pastor Tim has even shared his own struggle in prayer. Take some time to share your struggle and experience in prayer. What makes it so hard?
3. Which of the 5 occasions for prayer seen in the book of Acts is most present in your own life and why? Which is least present and why?

4. Which of the 5 would you most like to grow in 2017 and how do you plan to do that?

5. As we lean into prayer as a church in this season, we've been trying different things in our worship services from using the Lord's Prayer to small group prayer time to making time to receive prayer from others. How have these prayer experiments been for you? Encouraging? Stretching? Awkward? Delightful?

6. As we're considering the challenge to lean into prayer, how do you plan to do that personally and in your family/household?

7. How can your Growth Group lean into prayer together? Share ideas, make a plan and commit!

Praying Together (about 20 min.)

We often spend most of our prayer time sharing requests! This quarter we want to experiment with jumping right into prayer and sharing our burdens/requests through prayer. (If needed, you can ask questions after your prayer time.)

In light of the message, let's pray also for the spiritual leaders God has placed in our lives: Growth Group Shepherds, teachers, deacons, elders, ministry staff & pastors.