

Prayer - continued

Public Prayer Warnings

The Bible also gives us warnings concerning prayer. We are not to pray with hypocrisy or to be seen of men (Matthew 6:5-6; Luke 20:45-47; note John 15:7; 1 Timothy 2:8; James 5:16 and 1 John 3:22). We are not to pray with empty words or vain repetitions (Matthew 6:7-8). We are not to pray with self-righteousness (Luke 18:10-14). And, we are not to pray for selfish pleasures (James 4:3).

How Can We Improve Our Prayers?

When we pray together in the church assembly let's remember a few things. The men who are leading prayers should speak up so others can hear, understand, and respond with "Amen" (an affirmation of truth; 1 Corinthians 14:14-17). These men can pray using the different forms, not the same words. They can pray from the heart, not from mere habit. And, they can pray to be heard of God, not of men.

When prayer is made by the whole church it is a great act of worship to God and a great encouragement to all who do it. - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- Evil men justify their sins, but good men turn from their sins.
- There are many cheap religions, but the price of pure and undefiled religion always remains high.
- Some Christians are like a wheelbarrow; they must constantly be pushed.
- The problem with good intentions is that they are never found doing anything.

Warfield Blvd. church of Christ
290 Warfield Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37043

Website
wbcoc.org

Assembly Times
Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
Wednesday: 7 pm

Everyone Is Welcome!
For More Information Call
(931) 647-1324

Published and Edited By
Chris Reeves
(615) 389-3250
chrisreevesmail@gmail.com
TheGoodTeacher.com

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

*Peter therefore was kept in the prison:
but prayer was made earnestly of
the church unto God for him
- Acts 12:5 -*

With this article, I would like to continue our five-part series of studies on the basics of New Testament church worship. What did New Testament Christians do when they gathered together to worship the Lord? One thing they did was to take the Lord's supper together and another thing they did was pray.

Prayer Basics

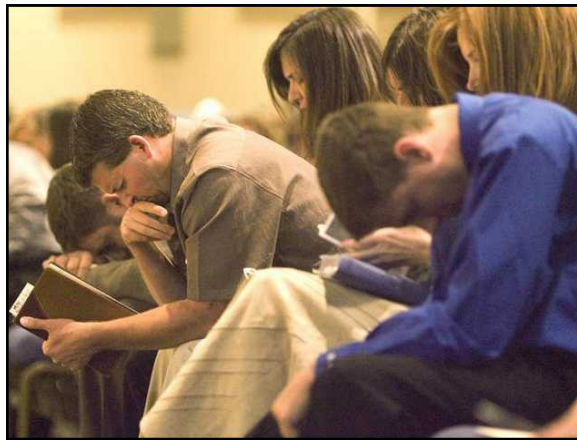
Praying to God, of course, can be individual (Acts 16:25; Jas. 1:5; 5:13), or congregational (Acts 2:42; 16:16). In this study, I am focusing on the praying that was done by the whole local church.

Jesus taught that prayer is to be made to God "in his name" (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24,26), meaning with respect to Jesus; according to his nature and teaching.

We learn from the New Testament that prayer was made by the church during certain important situations. For example, prayer was made by the

church in difficult times (Acts 12:5,12) and prayer was made by the church in times of decision, change, and farewell (Acts 6:6; 8:15; 13:3; 14:23; 21:5). We should do the same today in the local church.

We also learn that prayer was made by the church for certain important individuals. For example, the church prayed for preachers like Paul (2 Corinthians 1:11;



Ephesians 6:19; Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:17,25), all the saints (Ephesians 6:18), and all men and leaders outside the church (1 Timothy 2:1). We should pray for similar people today.

Another thing we learn about prayer is that prayer was made by the church with certain important attitudes. For example,

prayer was made by the church with earnestness (Acts 12:5), with thanksgiving (Colossians 3:17; 4:2), and regularly (Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:7).

The Bible also teaches us that prayers can be made in 5 different forms. A person or church can pray with...

- Adoration / praise (Acts 4:24ff) - speaking about the greatness of God.
- Confession (Hebrews 13:15; James 5:16) - speaking about one's own faith or sin and the need for forgiveness.
- Thanksgiving (Romans 16:4; Colossians 4:2-3; 1 Timothy 2:1) - speaking about how grateful one is for all blessings.
- Supplication / petition (Philippians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1) - speaking about one's own needs.
- Intercession (1 Timothy 2:1) - speaking about the needs and care of others.

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