

# Devoted to Prayer

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Ten)

Acts 2:42

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer”* (Acts 2:42)

## A. We're re-imagining church by going back to the early church

1. In spite of religious and political opposition, the Church continued to grow
2. By the end of Acts 28 (thirty years later) it was a worldwide movement

## “Constantly”

### A. Acts gives us a window into the prayer life of the early church

*“They all joined together constantly in prayer”* (Acts 1:14)

*“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place...”* (Acts 2:1)

*“They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”* (Acts 2:42)

*“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 4:31)

### B. Prayer was the life-blood of the early church

1. God constantly and consistently moves in response to our prayers
2. *“If we really believe God answers prayer, why are we praying so little?”*
  - a. We believe when we work hard, God will bless our efforts; so we work hard
  - b. Hudson Taylor: *“When we work we work, but when we pray God works”*

*“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty*” (Zech. 4:6)

## “By My Spirit”

### A. We tend to confuse “by my Spirit” with “our hard work”

1. We often talk about the Holy Spirit's power
2. We often fail to look up. We often fail to get down (on our knees)

### B. God invites us to use the resources he has provided: prayer and his Spirit

## “Whatever you ask...”

### A. Prayer reminds us of our dependence on God

*“I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5)

1. We spend enormous amounts of time and energy planning and programming

2. We need to learn how to cooperate with God and his Spirit

- a. Only God can change a heart and transform a life
- b. God made prayer central to the building of his church

## B. Prayer and Scripture invite us into God's will

1. In prayer, we give God our full attention
  - a. Prayer requires us to slow down
  - b. Prayer requires us to know and remember God is God
  - c. We think prayer is talking to God; its mostly about listening to him
2. We often make significant decisions without ever committing the issue to prayer or searching the Scripture

## C. Prayer is the means through which God unleashes his power

1. Prayer is powerful because God is powerful. Prayer changes things only because God changes things
2. Because God designed it this way - his power is released through prayer

*“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name...”* (John 14:12-13)

*“Prayer is the most important work of the church”* (O. Hallesby; Church and Prayer)

*“My house shall be called a house of prayer!”* (Matthew 21:13)

3. There is a significant difference between believing that prayer is important and believing prayer is essential
  4. Without prayer, the church has no power other than what we can muster
- ## D. Praying together promotes agreement
1. *“The family that prays together stays together”*
  2. Sustained corporate prayer is the secret to the growth of Christ's church

## “Fully Devoted”

- A. God longs to bless this church in ways we haven't yet seen
- B. Each one of us needs to be fully devoted to prayer
  1. Join the journey. Make a few moments in your day to spend with Jesus
  2. Pray. Ask someone to hold you accountable; do it together
  3. Get reacquainted with the Prayer Room; Get serious about prayer
- C. The Holy Spirit did it once. He can do it again - here - but we need to ask