

“We shall never see much change for the better in our churches in general until the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians.” wrote Charles Spurgeon in *Prayer Meeting.* “Only A

The regular meeting of members of a congregation for the express purpose of uniting in earnest prayer is becoming rare in the average church. Many churches no longer even schedule prayer meetings, and in those churches that do, typically less than 10% of the members would participate.

In all too many churches, prayer meetings have become dull, cold and lifeless, lacking in Biblical focus and missionary purpose.

THE BAROMETER OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Erroll Hulse in *“The Vital Place of the Prayer Meeting”* writes: *“You can tell with a fair degree of accuracy what the church is like by the demeanor or substance of the weekly prayer meeting. Is there genuine evangelistic concern? If so, it will be expressed in the prayers. Is there a heartfelt longing for the conversion of unconverted family members? If so, that is sure to surface. Is there a world vision and a fervent desire for Revival and the Glory of our Redeemer among the nations of the world? Such a burden cannot be suppressed... Intercession in the prayer meeting will soon reveal a loving church that cares for those who are oppressed and weighed down with trials and burdens. Those bearing trials too painful or personal to be described in public will nevertheless find comfort in the prayer meeting, for there the Holy Spirit is especially at work.”*

Matthew Henry wrote: ***“When God designs mercy, He stirs up prayer.”***

Peter Masters in *“The Power of the Prayer Meeting”* writes: *“In the prayer gathering preoccupation with ourselves as individual believers slips away, and we become a group of people longing for the blessing of others, and for the prospering of the cause. In the prayer gathering we are refined and honed... It cements unions and promotes respect... the church that prays together, stays together.”*

Jonathan Edwards in: “A Call to United, Extraordinary Prayer” **writes: “Prayerfulness is the natural response of a heart that is fully caught up in all Christ is to us and for us, over us and within us, through us and before us and upon us. Christ defines our agenda in prayer. Christ opens up the door to Heaven to present our prayers...Christ is the ultimate answer to all our prayers.”**

Jonathan Edwards also encouraged children’s prayer meetings: *“God, in His Word, has shown a remarkable regard to little children. Never was there such a glorious work amongst persons in their childhood...He has been pleased, and in a wonderful manner, to perfect praise out the mouths of babes and sucklings; and many of them have more of that knowledge and wisdom that please Him, and rendered their religious worship acceptable, than many of the great and learned men of the world....”*

The Lord Jesus promised: ***“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.”***

Matthew 18:19 – 20

Before the Day of Pentecost, the disciples ***“all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...”***

Acts 1:14. After Pentecost, the

disciples continued steadfastly

“in

the Apostle’s Doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Acts 2:42

When the church was afflicted by fierce persecution, ***“they raised their voice to God with one accord...”***

Acts 4:24

The first church in Europe was born in a women's prayer meeting (Acts 16:13 – 15). When Paul and Silas were arrested, they held a midnight prayer meeting in jail (Acts 16:22 – 26).

During the time of the Reformation, churches often held daily services for preaching and prayer, every morning and every evening. During the severe persecution in Sudan, many churches held daily prayer meetings – each morning and evening. Some of the fastest church growth in recent years has taken place in South Korea where most church members consistently participate in early morning prayer meetings – daily.

“If it is true that the kind of piety in a church rises no higher than it manifests itself in a prayer meeting, so that here, has one a barometer. All changes in spiritual life are faithfully recorded, then certainly too much attention cannot be given, by both the pastor and people, to the conducting of the prayer meeting.” (Lewis Thompson *“The Prayer Meeting and Its Improvement”* 1878).

REVIVALS BEGIN IN PRAYER MEETINGS

Those who conscientiously and habitually participate in prayer meetings *“experience more sweet and pure delight in the very exercise...grow more rapidly and steadily in grace... become the most devotional, active and useful Christians... and become the life and soul, as it were, of the church.”* (Edwin Hatfield *“The Social Prayer Meeting”* 1844).

Dr. Joel Beeke in *“Attending Prayer Meetings”* challenges: *“If every God fearing family, in every God honouring church around the world took the congregational prayer meeting seriously, what impact would that have around the globe? I believe that Scripture and Church history teaches us that the future of our children, our family, our church, and our nations depends on God's people storming the mercy seat together. Prayer is the normal means that God uses to shower His Heavenly blessings upon the earth.... We customarily record our appointments on our calendar. Will you not mark your church prayer meetings on your calendar as engagements of the highest priority for your entire family? Will you not prepare for them and try to bring a friend or two with you? Let us treasure prayer*

meetings. Let us engage in it with all our heart, remembering that
Revivals usually begin with prayer meetings.”

Prayerlessness is a root sin. God acts in answered prayer. Prayer is the price of spiritual success. Prayer is to the soul what breathing is to the body. If you are too busy to pray then you are busier than God wants you to be. There is nothing beyond the reach of prayer – except that which is outside of the Will of God.

“For this reason I bow on my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to His power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:14
– 21

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