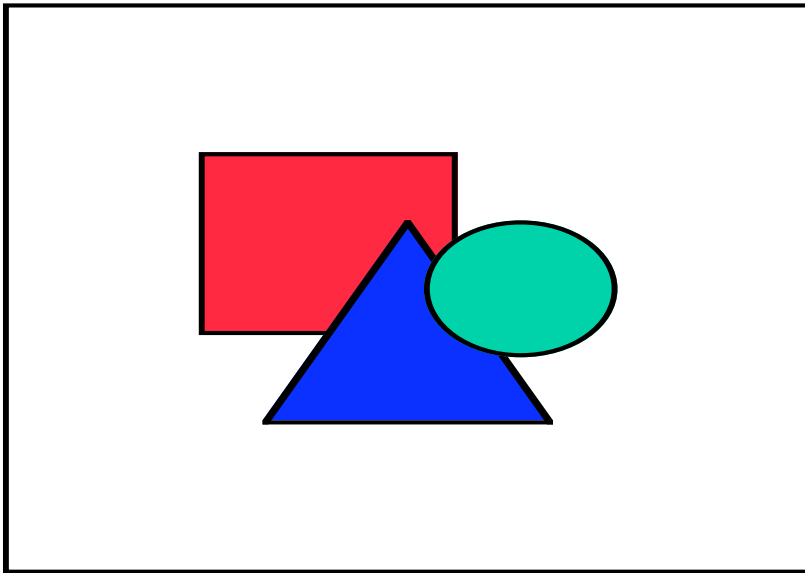


# Is The Prayer Meeting Dead?



“Our spiritual immaturity never shows up more than in our lack of prayer, be it alone or in a church prayer meeting. Let 20% of the choir members fail to turn up for rehearsal and the choirmaster is offended. Let 20% of the church members turn up for a prayer meeting, and the pastor is elated.”

*--Leonard Ravenhill*

As we look to the biblical account of the book of Acts we see the striking theme of prayer throughout its testimony. We see fervent prayer that depends on God and is desperate before God. The Church was founded in prayer; it began at a prayer meeting in the upper room in Jerusalem. The Church began in prayer, was sustained in prayer, and continues in prayer to this day. If a people are not praying they are straying. If prayer is not paramount and prominent then we are paralyzed and powerlessness.

“We live Move and have our being in God”, in constant communion and prayer with God. When we begin to see a drift from the success of the book of Acts in our modern day Church attempts we will also see a straying from This foundational principle of prayer. In the book of Acts we read about a powerful Church that prayed with unity, They prayed in the spirit, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” They prayed with godly fear, They prayed daily, “they continued daily with one accord.” They prayed with thanksgiving, Their prayers were answered, “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” They prayed with authority, They prayed in unison, “they lifted up their voice to God

with one accord.” They prayed with expectation, They prayed with belief, They prayed continually, “we will give ourselves continually to prayer.” And they prayed desperately.

Oh to realize and to really understand that the Church of God is a praying Church. Prayer is everything, without it we fail. Leonard Ravenhill spoke to this situation in the modern day Church in these words: “The ugly fact is that altar fires are either out or burning very low. The prayer meeting is dead or dying. By our attitude to prayer we tell God that what was begun in the Spirit we can finish in the flesh. Never has the most important work been left to so few.” There needs to be a revival of prayer in the Church.

## URGENT PRAYER

We are to pray with a sense of urgency. God has reminded me of a quote from a book by Chuck Smith, which says: Today, we are living in desperate times. Yet, the Church is not desperate before God in prayer. We are not living with a sense of urgency for the lost, for our Life's to be radically devoted to God, and for God's kingdom to come to this earth.

Prior to the welsh revival outbreak in 1904 God was moving and speaking to many believers.

One of them was Rev. Jenkins in Wales. Here is an account of this preacher: "The Rev. Joseph Jenkins had been deeply concerned about the lack of anointing in his own preaching, which compelled him to desperately seek a deeper life in Christ. Andrew Murray's book, 'With Christ in the School of Prayer' came into his possession and moved him greatly at this time. He became increasingly burdened by the indifference among the fellow Christians around him and the apathy of the young people in his own church. He exhorted them earnestly to obey the Spirit." This preacher caught the urgency of the hour and condition of the church.

This burden and urgency needs to have its outlet in prayer, praying earnestly for the moving of God's spirit. This hunger to pray for God to work in our hearts and in the lives of others really needs to be practiced. Oh for a praying church, urgent to see God move on behalf of man. The apostles had this sense of urgency in their prayers. They experienced distresses, troubles, persecutions, yet they prayed with urgency to God. They prayed believing it was the last hour and the night was fast coming upon them. Do you sense the urgency of the hour?

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up

the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." (Ezekiel 22:30).

## EFFECTUAL PRAYER

We are to pray believing that it is effectual. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Are you seeing answers to prayer? or are you not "diligently" seeking Him? Jesus gives the edict out to his disciples, Ask, seek, and knock, and ye shall! Not you might, but "ye shall." What comfort that gives us that we serve a God that if we call out to Him; He will hear and answer. God is waiting for His church to call upon Him with faith, believing that He will answer and work on behalf of the prayers of the church. God has not left the church to work on its own but rather that we are to depend wholly on Him and that dependence is to be through the agent of prayer in the life of the church.

James 5:16 says, "...The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Notice that it didn't say the prayers of the backslidden Christian or the unbeliever. But the prayers of a righteous man. Praying to God fervently shows him that the

prayers and things prayed for matter to us and that we believe they can and will be answered. Ah for one hundred praying Elijah's again to shake a city and for God to be glorified. Are we just seeking for prayer that avails or "avails much"? Can God be pleased when we have such a small conception of what God can and wants to do in our generation? Oh Lord allow our praying to be effectual!

### PERSISTENT PRAYER

We are also taught to pray persistently. The radically sold out brother Singh in India declared many years ago to a sleepy church: "Some people become tired at the end of ten minutes or half an hour of prayer. What will they do when they have to spend Eternity in the presence of God? We must begin the habit here and become used to being with

God." The Church of God was making persistent petitions to God on behalf of the Apostle Peter who was in jail. The Scripture says: "but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." An all-night prayer meeting to God for their beloved pastor! They never gave up until God moved and performed the miraculous. , when is the last time you heard of a group of people coming together to pray until they

truly see God answer? Oh for persistent praying, for Holy Ghost men filled with a holy, stubborn persistence.

How much depends on this type of prayer and how lost it seems amongst us. Hear the saintly Samuel Brengle on this much needed type of prayer: "The great battles, the battles that decide our destiny and the destiny of generations yet unborn, are not fought on public platforms, but in the lonely hours of the night and in moments of agony. All great soul-winners have been men of much and mighty prayer, and all great revivals have been preceded and carried out by persevering, prevailing knee-work in the closet." Oh dear reader will you answer this call to the work of prayer?

### THE SACRIFICE OF TIME

John Mott gave this challenge before a student convention: "The men that will change the colleges and seminaries here represented are the men that will spend the most time alone with God... It takes time for the fires to burn. It takes time for God to draw near and for us to know that He is there. It takes time to assimilate His truth. You ask me, How much time? I do not know. I know it means time enough to forget time."

Are we going to count this cost or are we so busy with the things of the world that we cannot afford the time for God. Leonard Ravenhill stated in his old age: "The one thing I know I can say is I gave God my time." Hear the admonition from the scholarly Horatius Bonar: "Up, then, with speed, and work; Fling ease and self away- This is no time for thee to sleep- Up, watch, and work, and pray!"

"A young man in Bible school offered to help David Wilkerson years ago when he was ministering on the streets of New York City. Wilkerson asked him how much time he spent in prayer. The young student estimated about 20 minutes a day. Wilkerson told him, "Go back, young man. Go back for a month and pray two hours a day, every day for 30 days. When you've done that, come back. Come back, and I might consider turning you loose on the streets where there is murder, rape, violence and danger...If I sent you out now on 20 minutes a day, I'd be sending a soldier into battle without any weapons, and you would get killed." And herein is where the reading stops and we "go forward on our knees." May God give each one that reads this a sense of the divine responsibility to pray aright and fully as which pleases God. Pray needs to be our

number one possession in these last days.

**"...Men ought  
always to pray,  
and not to faint."**  
(Luke 18:1)