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Group Guide

The Church Demonstrates Prayerful Dependence

June 8, 2025

Main Passage: Acts 1:12-14; 12:3-16; James 5:16

Theological Theme

Prayer, both individually and in community, is a vital attribute of a healthy church.

Introduction

- 1. How effective have you found prayer in your life? What has contributed to this view?
- 2. What role do you think prayer plays in a healthy church?

1. United in Prayer (Acts 1:12-14)

Note how the believers in Acts followed what Jesus Himself modeled. Prayer was an important hallmark of Jesus's earthly ministry. Luke 5:16 notes that Jesus "often withdrew to deserted places and prayed." Once, He was praying for so long that people began to worry and went to search for Him (Mark 1:35-37).

- 1. What does it tell us about the priority of prayer that it was the first step Jesus's followers took after His ascension?
- 2. Why is it important that this was a united act and not just one or two people in the group on their own?
- 3. Application: What would it look like for our group to be "united in prayer"?

2. Together in Prayer (James 5:16)

James 5:16 gives us another model for a healthy church: True Christian community should be a safe space to confess our sins to one another, and the response to that confession should be prayer. We live in a time where we see public figures routinely get "canceled" when they fail, but that's not what Scripture tells us godly community should look like.

- 1. What connection did James make between confession and healing? How have you experienced this reality?

- ❓ How have you seen that, “The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect”?
- ❓ Application: How are we to apply this verse in our daily lives and time together as a church?

3. Fervent in Prayer (Acts 12:5-16)

Peter’s arrest happened on the heels of the execution of James the brother of John (v. 2). These believers had every reason to think Peter would be next in line for martyrdom, but they knew and believed the Lord could help, so they fervently asked Him to do so. God doesn’t always answer our fervent prayers with a “yes,” but in this case, He did so in a miraculous way.

- ❓ The church immediately turned to prayer once Peter was imprisoned. How likely are we to turn to prayer as our first option in times of trouble?
- ❓ How has your prayer life grown through praying alongside other believers?
- ❓ Application: In Acts, the church came together in Peter’s time of need. What would it look like for us to do the same for those in need in our church?

Conclusion

Today’s passage reminds us of the importance of a unified, praying church. Prayer is essential. In Scripture we see the importance of two different types of prayer: individual prayer (as modeled consistently by Jesus, who would go off on His own to pray and have private time with the Father) and corporate prayer, or prayer in community (as modeled by the believers in Acts 1). Both are important and necessary for the church.

- ❓ How have you seen the effectiveness of prayer, personally or in community?
- ❓ How can we commit to prayer for one another on an ongoing basis?
- ❓ How might fervent united prayer give us more opportunities to share the gospel with others?