

A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLES

“A Praying House”

Introduction-

Principle: Our corporate prayer must be based on closet prayer.

Matt 6:5-6 KJV

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Our private prayer life determines the real effectiveness of our public prayer ministry. We need to meet God in the secret place before we ask Him to move on our behalf in the public place.

A House of Prayer or a Den of Robbers?

Mark 11:15-17

15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,

16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.

17 And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" NIV

After cleansing the Temple of its merchants, Jesus quoted two Scriptures in teaching the people about what He had done. One was Isaiah 56:7. The other was Jeremiah 7:11. We have placed most of our focus on the Isaiah verse, “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” But now it is time to look at the “den of robbers.”

Jer 7:9-11

9 Do you really think that you can steal, murder, commit adultery, lie, and worship Baal and all of those new gods of yours,

10 and then come here and stand before me in my Temple and chant, 'We are saved!'-only to go right back to all these evil things again?

11 Is my Temple but a den of robbers in your eyes? For I see all the evil going on in there.

TLB

By continuing in their sin, the people of God were treating His house like a den of robbers. In our present day vernacular, we call this “playing Church.” When we, the people of God, live like the world all week long and then come together to worship God and give Christian thanks for the saving grace of Jesus only to go back out Monday and behave as we did before, we are turning the house of God into a den of robbers.

Because of Judah's continual and willful sin, the Lord told Jeremiah to not pray or cry out for the people for He would not listen (Jer. 7:16; 11:14). The Church of Jesus Christ needs to make herself ready if she is to have her prayers answered.

James 4:1-5; 8-10

- 1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?
- 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.
- 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
- 4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.
- 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?
- 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.
- 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. NIV

Because God's house is to be a praying house, the service should move us through cleansing so that our prayers and supplications receive answers instead of condemnation.

The Prayers of the House-

1 Tim 2:1-4

- 1 I exhort therefore, that, **first of all**, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;
- 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.
- 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
- 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. KJV

Prayer has primary importance. "First of all" supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.

Supplication-

A supplication is an appeal to a higher authority for favor (or grace). It is often accompanied by confession of sin and an appeal to mercy.

Dan 9:17-19

- 17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.
- 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; **for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.**

19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name." NKJV

Beseeking God because of His mercy, not our righteousness, reminds us of the words of Jesus.

Luke 18:9-14

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-robbers, evildoers, adulterers-or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." NIV

Prayers-

We should be ready to pray to God on anyone's behalf. People are as open to sincere prayer for their special needs as they are for the genuine love that should motivate our prayer. When we meet people in the walk of life and hear of their troubles and trials, we should take a moment and pray with them that they might see that our God is a mighty God and worthy to be praised.

Intercessions-

Ezek 22:30

"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. NIV

Intercession involves enveloping people with God's protection through prayer, or standing in the breach they have made through sin to help avert the consequences thereof. Through intercession we can help protect the saint and convert the sinner.

Giving of thanks-

When was the last time you thanked God for state troopers? Judges? Tax collectors??? We are to pray for those who are in authority and this includes thanking God for the service that civil officials provide. When we do this, we are less likely to fall into the trap of complaining.

Crying Out to God with One Accord-

2 Chron 20:7-9

7 O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?

8 They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying,

9 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.' NIV

Crying out to God is a particularly powerful way for the house to pray in concert. Crying out to God must be done in faith (Ps. 22:4-5) and from the heart (Hos 7:13-14). When the Church cries out in unison, God does mighty deeds.

Acts 4:23-31 NKJV

23 And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things?

26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.'

27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,

30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

An amplified definition of "one accord" would be "at the same time with like passion." When the church is unified, the power of her prayer increases.

Matt 18:18-20

18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth **agree** about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." NIV

The word agree in the Greek is sumfooneoo, which means "to sound together, be in accord." In a sense, our prayers need to be a harmonized, three-fold cord – us with each other and our prayers with His word.

John 15:7-8 NIV

7 If you remain in me and my words [*rhema*] remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

8 **This is to my Father's glory**, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Conclusion-

A faithful, praying church brings glory to God.

Ps 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." NKJV