

I. EFFECTIVE AND ENJOYABLE CORPORATE PRAYER

A. The Lord said that one of the main expressions of the Church before His return would be prayer (Isa. 56:7; Amos 9:11–15; Acts 15:15–16; Mal. 1:11). We must learn how to do *effective, enjoyable corporate prayer in the order* God established¹.

⁷ *Even them [Gentiles] I will ... **make them joyful in My house of prayer. For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.** (Isa. 56:7)*

¹⁶ *‘After this I [Jesus] will return and **will rebuild the tabernacle of David** [The God-given order of worship and prayer], **which has fallen down...** ¹⁷ **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord...** (Acts 15:16-17)*

B. In September 1982 when Mike Bickle was in Cairo, Egypt, the Lord told him: ***I will change the understanding and expression of Christianity in the earth in one generation.***

1. ***Changing the understanding:*** speaks of the way unbelievers will perceive the Church. Today, many see the Church as boring, irrelevant, and non-threatening (Acts 5:11–13).
2. ***Changing the expression:*** is the way the church expresses its life together as a prophetic people of prayer who walk out Sermon on the Mount lifestyles with a forerunner spirit.

C. Many believers have little experience in corporate prayer meetings. Most churches offer many activities but corporate prayer gatherings. Everyone who has attended a prayer meeting felt awkward, bored or annoyed at one point. One of the reasons for these issues is the lack of teaching in what sustains enjoyable prayer.

1. ***Involvement.*** What do you do in a corporate prayer meeting? How do you know what to pray?
2. ***Focus.*** Who determines the focus of the prayers in the room and how do they do this?
3. ***Differences.*** How do you unify believers from various denominations, traditions and cultures?
4. ***Detractions.*** *Exhortation in the form of a prayer* (preaching prayers) and *primarily negative prayers* (focusing mostly on sin, challenges and the Devil) often detract from prayer meetings. How do we address these kinds of prayers and other things that take momentum from the room?

D. Praying apostolic prayers will address these challenges as well as provide many positive benefits.

II. APOSTOLIC PRAYERS: THE LANGUAGE OF GOD’S HEART GIVEN TO US

A. The Scripture is also a ***prayer manual***, *directing* us how to pray. As we pray the Word with our own mouths, It ***reveals*** *God’s heart* and by the Spirit, ***marks*** *our own*. (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:2; Rom. 10:8, 17)²

B. We ***value*** and ***use*** apostolic prayers because they are ***the language of God’s heart***. These prayers were burning on the Father’s heart—and still are. He gave them to the Spirit to give to the apostles.

¹ God gave David plans by the Holy Spirit including the “order” of heavenly worship (1 Chr. 28:11-19; 2 Chr. 29:25; 35:4, 15; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:45), involving paid Levites who served as singers and musicians, ministering unceasingly before Ark of the Lord’s Presence in Jerusalem (1 Chr. 9:33; 16:1, 4, 37; 25:5, 7). The principles and values of the Tabernacle of David are timeless and applicable today.

² We will only address the apostolic prayers found in the NT in this briefing, but there are great prayers in the Old testament as well which one can use and adapt for personal and corporate prayer.

C. *If the Father gave it to the Church, it will be answered by Him.* Since the prayers are in the Scripture, *they are the very will of God*, ensuring an answer and response from God! (1 Jn. 5:14–15). These prayers are a blank check given to us by God which we can sign our name upon regarding our city, church or family.

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14–15)

D. Apostolic prayers are the prayers of our chief Apostle and High Priest, Jesus (Heb. 3:1; Eph. 2:20) and those given to His apostles by the Spirit. ***There are around twenty-five to thirty apostolic prayers.***

E. Many of us have never used apostolic prayers to pray—but having just read or studied them in the NT.

III. FEATURES OF APOSTOLIC PRAYERS.

A. *Apostolic prayers are God-focused.* They address the One who possesses unlimited, uncontested power on His throne in heaven (Rev. 4–5), the most kind, gentle and perfect Being—our Father (Psalm 18:35; Isa. 55:7; Luke 15:20–24; James 1:17; Heb. 4:6; 12:9, 22–24; Rev. 15:3). These prayers do not address demons, principalities or powers in the heavens. The model of the NT is to rebuke demonic powers attached to individual people on the earth³, not principalities in heavenly places⁴.

B. *Apostolic prayers are positive.* They ask for an impartation of something good, not a removal of something bad. We pray for love to abound not for hatred to leave (Phil. 1:9-11). We pray for holiness, not for the spirit of immorality or pornography to go (1 Thes. 3:9–13). We focus on the positive because the Bible does this and after years of doing it, we will see it's beneficial for those in the prayer service. God still answers negative focused prayers as He's a gracious, kind editor of our prayers!

1. *Positive prayers build unity.* Unity is critical for anointing in our priestly ministry of intercession (Psalm 133:1–3). When we pray against negative things, people may differ in opinion or question the person praying and immediately disengage.
2. *Positive prayers enhance love.* If a person prays, “God, deal with the sin in this city,” for example, some may get annoyed or judgmental about that person or their prayer. They may think, “Who is this person to pray this way?” Negative prayers sometimes have an angry tone which is easy to dislike. In general, negative prayers do not build up the listener (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:4–8, 13; Phil. 4:8; Eph. 4:29).
3. *Positive prayers grow faith* (Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2, 5). When we hear people pray the apostolic prayers, *they increase our faith because we see the plans of God for His Church—a victorious, mature and spotless Bride* able to partner with Him and know His heart (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Rev. 21:2⁵). Do you believe in a victorious Church? Praying the apostolic prayers with faith will ensure you do!

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)

³ Jesus rebuked demons on the earth (Mat. 8:16; 17:18; Mk. 1:25; 5:8; 9:25; Luke 4:35; 8:29; 9:42) and trained his disciples to do so (Mat. 10:1; Luke 10:17; Mk. 16:15-17; Acts 16:18).

⁴ Fallen angels reside in heavenly places as powers and principalities until the Lord removes them upon His return (Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:16; Isa. 24:21; Rev. 12:4; 7–9).

C. *Apostolic prayers are for the Church.* Apostolic prayers are almost entirely devoted to the strengthening of the Church, not for the lost. Only Romans 10:1 is concerned about the lost Jewish unbelievers. God deeply cares for the salvation of the lost and the transformation of society.

1. God has given the Church all authority (Mat. 16:17–19; Mt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:14–18).

¹⁸ *...I [Jesus] will **build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

¹⁹ *...**whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven** (Mat. 16:18–19)*

2. God has promised to put His glory in the Church and put His glory on display (Mat. 5:13–15; Eph. 3:21). It will happen. The Lord said before His return the Church would possess *divine understanding* (Jer. 23:20; Dan. 11:32–33; 12:10), *godly character* (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Mat. 5:48) and *supernatural power* (Dan. 11:32–33; Mt. 16:18–19; Jn. 14:12).

3. In Paul's day, the revival in the Church of Ephesus resulted in the entire province of Asia (Modern Turkey) hearing the gospel and pagan society transformed! (Acts 19:10, 20). Because the Church was filled with God's presence and operating in a greater measure of the Spirit, thousands of anointed preachers and teachers went throughout the cities of Asia preaching and demonstrating the gospel. *Unusual miracles* (19:11), *healings* (19:12), *deliverances* (19:12), *the fear of the Lord* (19:17), *mass conviction and confession* (19:18) and *the public removal of sorcery/witchcraft* (darkness) (19:19).

¹⁰ *And this [effective ministry in Ephesus] continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks...²⁰ So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:10–20)*

D. *The apostolic prayers help us pray with a greater vision* for what God could do in the Church of our city, region and nation, not *only* our individual needs or congregations. (IE., Aunt Mildred's cat)

IV. PRACTICALS

A. *First, read the apostolic prayer.* It is common for the language in these prayers to feel awkward at the beginning as the words and phrases are not every day vocabulary. Over time, this feeling will change.

B. *Isolate key phrases.* We may not know what to isolate and if we do isolate a few phrases, we may not be confident what they fully mean. Over time, as we pray these prayers, study these passages and dialogue with the Lord about them, our understanding will increase and we will feel more confident using them.

C. *Elaborate what the phrases mean.* Take a few phrases develop their thoughts and why they matter.

D. *Pray from your heart.* No one can pray from your heart but you. Only you can speak God's words (Rom. 10:8, 17) and love God with your own voluntary love. This is a fragrant and necessary offering to the Lord.

1. As a picture of NT prayers from a priestly people, God called the incense the priests burned before Him in the Tabernacle of Moses, "fragrant" (Ex. 30:8–9; Lev. 4:7; 16:12; 1 Chron. 23:13; 2 Chron. 29:11; Luke 1:9).

2. God takes our prayers in heaven and keeps them in bowls to be poured out (Rev. 5:8; 8:1–5)

3. All heavenly activity comes from prayer (Lk. 18:7; Rev. 8:1–5)

V. THE APOSTOLIC PRAYERS

A. Jesus

1. The Lord's prayer (Matt 6:9–13)
2. Prayer for anointed laborers in the Harvest (Matt 9:37–38; Luke 10:2)
3. Prayer for the release of the Holy Spirit's ministry (Luke 11:13)
4. Prayer for strength in temptation (Matt. 26:40–41)
5. The High Priestly Prayer (John 17:1–26)

B. Paul

1. Prayer for revelation of Jesus' beauty and the Bride's destiny unto transformation (Eph. 1:17–19)
2. Prayer for the release of supernatural strength in the heart unto experiencing God's emotions (Eph. 3:16–19)
3. Prayer for God's love to abound in our heart resulting in discernment and righteousness (Phil 1:9–11)
4. Prayer to know God's will, to be fruitful in ministry and strengthened by intimacy with God (Col. 1:9–12)
5. Prayer for unity in the church across a city or region (Rom. 15:5–7)
6. Prayer to be filled with supernatural joy, peace and hope (Rom. 15:13)
7. Prayer for Israel to be saved through Jesus (Rom. 10:1)
8. Prayer for the release of apostolic ministry and to abound in love and holiness (1 Thes. 3:9–13)
9. Prayer for the release of the Holy Spirit's power unto mature holiness (1 Thes. 5:23–24)
10. Prayer to be equipped and prepared to receive the fulness of God's destiny for the church (2 Thes. 1:11–12)
11. Prayer for the Word to increase by the release of God's power to win unbelievers to Jesus. (2 Thes. 3:1–5; cf. God beautifying his Word with signs and wonders: Acts 13:48; 19:20; 6:7; 12:24; 13:12)
12. Prayer that God would open a door of evangelism through releasing His power on the Word. (Col. 4:2–4; cf. God creating an open door for evangelism: Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Rev 3:8; 2Tim 2:24–26; Acts 16:14; Luke 24:45)
13. Prayer to enriched with the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit leading unto righteousness. (1 Cor. 1:4–8; cf. We must desire what we pray for: 1 Cor. 12:31; 1 Cor. 14:1, 39)
14. Prayer for the release of apostolic ministry and that we would abound in love and holiness (1 Cor. 3:9–13)
15. An apostolic intercessory benediction to be established with insight into the mystery. (Rom. 16:25–27)

C. Peter (Acts 4:24–31; 2 Peter 1:2, 3; 3:18)

D. John (Acts 4:24–31; Rev. 22:17, 20)

VI. PRAYING THE APOSTOLIC PRAYER

1. Pick a target for your prayer: what topic, situation or person / people group will you address with this prayer?

2. Choose an apostolic prayer: This could be one you will use privately or the prayer leader uses during the intercession set. Write out the Scripture and the reference below.

3. Identify key phrases. Circle a few key phrases in the verse above that you want to emphasize in your prayer.

4. Elaborate key words / phrases. Pick one of the phrases above and write what you think it means and why it is important to ask God in this situation.

5. Now pray. Read the Scripture, pray highlighting the key ideas or phrases you previously circled you target the specific situation on your heart. Try to go longer than you feel comfortable. Stretch your vocabulary and understanding while you give the Spirit time to highlight things as you pray. Repeat the process again!