

(10)

(Continuation from last week 02/12/14)

The First Church: Worthy Traits

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, Acts 2:1-7:60

The First Church: Worthy Traits, Acts 2:41-47

2. (Acts 2:42) Steadfastness: the early believers were a people who “continued steadfastly” in four things.

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴² “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Spiritual Duties

It Was a Saved Church

It Was a Scriptural Church

It Was a Fellowshiping Church

It Was a Christ-Centered Church

It Was a Praying Church

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴² “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

The first fellowship was eagerly and persistently engaged in the critical duty of prayer. Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscles of omnipotence. Understanding the sense of loss His disciples were feeling as they anticipated His leaving, the Lord Jesus Christ had promised in John 14:13-14 that “**whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.**”

The early church took that promise as the source of God's provision for all their needs, and they relentlessly pursued divine help. The **prayer** in view here is not only that of individual believers but of the church corporately (cf. Acts 1:14, 24; Acts 4:24-31).

Acts 1:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ “These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

Acts 1:24 (NASB)

²⁴“And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen.”

Acts 4:24-31 (NASB)

²⁴“And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, “O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,
²⁵ who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, ‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE 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 in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,
²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”
²⁹ “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,
³⁰ while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”
³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness.”

Sadly, prayer is much neglected in the church today. Programs, concerts, entertainment, or the testimonies of the rich and famous draw large crowds. Prayer meetings, on the other hand, attract only the faithful few. That is undoubtedly the reason for much of the weakness in the contemporary church.

Unlike the early church, we have forgotten the Bible’s commands to pray at all times ([Luke 18:1](#); [Ephesians 6:11](#)), and to be devoted to prayer ([Romans 12:12](#); [Colossians 4:2](#)).

Luke 18:1 (NASB)

¹“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.”

Ephesians 6:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

Romans 12:12 (NASB)

¹²“Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer.”

Colossians 4:2 (NASB)

²“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*.”

The first fellowship knew the critical importance of pursuing spiritual duties. They knew the church must be made up of saved individuals, devoted to studying the Word, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Those elements are the unique expressions of the life of the church. They are the means of grace by which the church becomes what God wants it to be.

DEEPER STUDY # 7

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴² “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

(Acts 2:42) Prayer: the early believers were a people who persevered in prayer. The idea is church prayer, united prayer with the whole body of believers.

1. Through prayer they were brought into the most intimate fellowship and presence of God. They could get no closer to God than when they were *drawing nigh* to God through prayer.

Psalm 73:28 (NASB)

²⁸ “But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.”

Psalm 145:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.”

Matthew 18:20 (NASB)

²⁰ “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

Hebrews 7:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ (“For the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”

2. Through prayer they received things from God.

They received His provision for both their souls and lives.

Matthew 21:22 (NASB)

²² “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

John 16:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”