

The Power of a Praying Church

Acts 12:5-17

Prayer is essential! When we pray it, demonstrates our dependence on God. For without Him, we can do nothing. Although personal prayer is important, there's something powerful about the prayers of a group of believers petitioning God. When we are on one accord, as the believers were in Acts, chapter 2, God will manifest Himself to us in unexpected ways. The story of Peter's release in Acts, chapter 12 demonstrates the power and effectiveness of a praying church. Oh, if only the church would continue to pray fervently, we would witness miracles, signs, and wonders! There is absolutely nothing too hard for God when we pray, and believe.

The saints in the early church were empowered by the Holy Spirit to share the Good News of the Gospel, and the church was advancing. These believers were committed to the Lord Jesus and were willing to suffer the consequences for their beliefs. Chapter twelve begins by announcing the death of James, the brother of John. Peter was arrested shortly after and was thrown into prison.

It was Herod's intention to bring Peter out for an open trial after the Passover. The church was praying while Peter was in prison. To ensure that he wouldn't escape, he was bound with chains and placed between two soldiers. There were guards at the entrance to ensure that he would remain in prison, but the church was praying!

The Bible says suddenly an Angel of the Lord appeared and shone a light in the cell. He struck Peter and said, "Get Up," and the chains fell off. Sometimes the enemy thinks he has us bound, but God can make a sudden move and everything that had us bound will fall off. The Angel instructed Peter to get dressed and follow him. Although he didn't understand what was happening, Peter followed the angel's instructions. There will be times when we are not given all of the answers. We just have to trust God enough to follow His instructions. Once Peter was led out of the prison, the angel disappeared. Only then did he realize that the Lord had sent an angel to free him from the hands of those who wanted to destroy him.

He went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, where the prayer meeting was being held. Peter knocked on the door and announced himself. A servant named Rhoda was so excited after hearing Peter's voice that she forgot to open the door before telling everyone that he was there. They thought that she had mistaken an angel for Peter and didn't believe her report immediately. However, Peter continued to knock, and he finally gained entrance into the house. He testified to them what the Lord had done for him by freeing him from the hands of those who imprisoned him. This experience did not hinder nor halter the believers, but strengthened their determination. Oh, if the church would only get on one accord and pray! What a time that would be! What a time!

Blessings!

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