

Treachery and Triumph

Matthew 26:47-56

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May 16, 2010

Shepherd's Community Church

The Crowd

(*Luke 22:6, 52; John 7:32-46; 18:3-5; 10:17-18; Proverbs 10:24; Exodus 3:14*)

The Traitor

(*John 13:30; 12:6; 6:15; Luke 22:6; 12:1-2, 15; Mathew 7:26-27; 13:20-21; 23:28*)

The Disciples

(*Luke 22:49, 35-38; 51; Matthew 26:41; Genesis 9:6; Proverbs 19:2; Zechariah 13:7*)

The Savior

(*John 16:33; Romans 8:35-37; 2 Corinthians 2:14*)

Why Pray with the Church?

In his book *Praying for One Another*, Pastor Gene Getz observes,

The hallmark of Western civilization has been rugged individualism. Because of our philosophy of life, we are used to the personal pronouns 'I' and 'my' and 'me.' We have not been taught to think in terms of 'we' and 'our' and 'us.' Consequently, we individualize many references to corporate experience in the New Testament, thus often emphasizing personal prayer. The facts are that more is said in the Book of Acts and the Epistles about corporate prayer, corporate learning of biblical truth, corporate evangelism, and corporate Christian maturity and growth than about the personal aspects of these Christian disciplines. Don't misunderstand. Both are intricately related. But the personal dimensions of Christianity are difficult to maintain and practice consistently unless they grow out of a proper corporate experience on a regular basis.

Prayer With The Church Is A Mark Of New Testament Christianity

The first Christians were men and women of prayer. But their reputation as praying people does not come from their individual prayer lives nearly as much as from their congregational prayer. Let's return to Acts 2:42 and that first description of church life in Jerusalem. We find there that when God's people were full of the Spirit, this was the result: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in *prayers*" (italics added).

Don't think of this merely as an observation of the quaint habits of Christians long ago in a culture far away. If there is distance between the practice of these believers and that of many Christians today, it isn't just the separation of centuries and cultures. As the early part of Acts 2 relates, God had come powerfully upon these people. When He did, one of the results was a magnetic devotion to praying with others who had the Spirit of God. Praying with the church is what Christians eagerly do when they are full of God. So if we feel no compulsion for intercession with God's people, perhaps that alone should prompt us to pray for God to come among us as He did upon those believers.

If you have ever read the book of Acts, you know it is impossible to imagine the members of the church in Jerusalem *not* gathering to pray with each other. This was Christianity in the New Testament. Congregational prayerlessness ought to be just as unimaginable for us in our own churches. If we want to see in our churches what they saw in theirs, we should pray with our churches as they prayed with theirs.

E. M. Bounds, author of many books on prayer, maintained, "The life, power, and glory of the church is prayer... Without it, the church is lifeless and powerless." The churches we read about in the New Testament were anything but lifeless and powerless. They were churches where the people made a priority of prayer.

Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church*, 163-165