

Theological Equipping Class – How to be a Community of Prayer “Delight. Display. Declare: The Mission of The Parkway Church”

The Parkway Church exists to Glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ who: Delight in Him, Display His Love to one another, and Declare Him to the World

The Nature of Prayer

- Prayer as fellowship with God
- Prayer as dependence on God
- Prayer as fuel for the mission of God

The Church as a Community of Prayer

“Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” – Matthew 6:9-13

Acts 1:12-14 – “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”

Acts 2:42 – “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common...And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Acts 4:24-30 – “²³ When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— 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 plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon

their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.”

Acts 12:1-16 – “About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.² He killed James the brother of John with the sword,³ and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also...And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church...When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying...But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed.”

Acts 13:1-3 – “Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers... While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”

Acts 16:25-34 – “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened...Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house...Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.”

Key things to notice:

- #1. Identity of the Church - The Church is a people of prayer
- #2. The Fuel for the mission of the Church – The Church praying together
- #3. The Content of the Church’s Prayers
 - “O believing brethren! What an instrument is this which God hath put into your hands! Prayer moves Him that moves the universe.” - Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Revival and Prayer:

- Revivals throughout church history are preceded by prayer AND result in further prayer

- Jonathan Edwards, during the 1st Great Awakening, published *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer For the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time*.
 - “It is God’s will, through his wonderful grace, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ’s kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will that the extraordinary prayers of his people should precede it.” – Jonathan Edwards

Commands to pray together in the New Testament:

- “Though we might fail to notice this in our individualized age, the Bible often assumes that God’s people will pray together.” - Jim Hamilton
- 2 Corinthians 1:10-12 – “*He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ¹¹ You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*”
- Romans 12:12 – “*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*”
- Colossians 4:2-4 – “*Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.*”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – “*Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*”
- Ephesians 6:17-19 – “*and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel*”
- “With all due regard to churches’ individual circumstances, it’s hard to justify the lack of congregational prayer in many of today’s churches, or the relegation of prayer to an obligatory sidelight. People need pastoral and congregational prayer for the burdens they bring into church. And whatever a church’s brilliant programming, the power of God alone will fulfill a church’s mission and foster revival. No element of worship better signals Christians’ dependence upon God than prayer. Pastors who put prayer front-and-center each week are demonstrating that dependence in a practical, biblical way.” – Thomas Kidd, Professor at Midwestern

What to Pray for as a Community of Prayer

- Pray “Big” Prayers:
 - “I remember some years ago visiting a church incognito. I sat in the back row...When we came to the pastoral prayer, it was led by a lay brother, because the pastor was on holiday. So he prayed that the pastor might have a good holiday. Well, that’s fine. Pastors should have good holidays. Second, he prayed for a lady member of the church who was about to give birth to a child that she might have a safe delivery, which is fine. Third, he prayed for another lady who was sick, and then it was over. That’s all there was. It took 20 seconds. I said to myself, it’s a village church with a village god. They have no interest in the world outside. There was no thinking about the poor, the oppressed, the refugees, the places of violence, world evangelization.” - John Stott
- Pray the Bible:
 - Ephesians 1:15-22 – *“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”*
 - Ephesians 3:14-19 – *“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*
 - Matthew 28:19-20 – *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

- Acts 2:42-47 – “*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*”
- Pray Parkway’s Mission Statement: *The Parkway Church exists to Glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ who: Delight in Him, Display His Love to one another, and Declare Him to the World*
- Pray for Church Needs:
 - “*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.*” – James 5:14-15

How to be a Community of Prayer

Church Gatherings:

- Prayer Meeting
- Pastoral Prayer

Smaller Prayer Gatherings outside of Sunday:

- Church members gathering to pray throughout the week
- Combine book studies or Bible studies with prayer
- Combine outreach with prayer
- Regularly praying with your family

Being intentional to overlay your relationships with prayer:

- Overlay relationships with prayer: Lunches, Playdates, etc.
- Overlap normal “hangouts” with prayer
- Plan to carve out time to pray with others:
 - Meet to Pray. Pray over Zoom or phone call. Pray in car together after lunch. Etc.
- Pray through the Church Directory
- You can always pray “right now”