

**Acts 2:41-47 - Prayer
True North
Core Values Series 2018**

“41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

If you are new to Vista – you have probably found that the roads here can be a little confusing

A)The roads around here are always – curving –

B)I grew up in OC – everything was pretty straight – N/S/E/W

C)Here: - Start going one way and sometimes it seems going in the opposite direction

1)I have spent 30 yrs of my life here now and I sometimes still can get mixed up

D)First time ever 1984 beach. – Drive West - end up there! – End up in Valley Center

1)A Navigational device would have come in handy

Life like Vista can be confusing and complicated

A)Lots of twist and turns – lots of unforeseen storms that come crashing into our lives

B)Having a good spiritual Compass is essential to navigating through this life.

C)For the early church – they had a set of Core Values that kept them grounded

1)A set of Core Values that kept them on track – moving in the right direction

D)These **Core Values** were **6 practices** that they were continually Devoting themselves to.

We have been calling this set of Values their True North!

A)When you know where True North is – everything else falls into place!

B)These six Core Values served as their True North – their continual point of reference

1)Their **RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS**
2)THEIR **MISSION** in this world

C)We have looked at the first two of the Core Values

They were continually devoting themselves to:

1)The **WORD**: teaching centered around **JESUS**
2)**Fellowship**: Sharing in common their life in Jesus

D)Today we are going to look at CV #3 Prayer

The Disciples continually devoted themselves to: Prayer: - Reasons:

A)Modeled by Jesus –

B)It was common for them to wake up in the mornings – **discover Jesus was already gone**

1)He had been up before the dawning of the new day – was already off somewhere in Prayer – Mark 1

C)Saw Jesus depart to secluded places to pray – Put them in a boat and – went up on the MT to pray

D)**Prayed before big decisions** – Picking the 12
1)Lord Peter – are you sure?

E)Prayed in moments of Crisis – the garden of Gethsemane –

Prayer was an important part of the Life of Jesus!

A)No doubt this is the reason that the disciples asked Jesus teach us to Pray

B) Of all the things the disciples could have asked Jesus to teach them –

1)It was his Prayer life that was on their hearts

C)They didn't ask Jesus to teach them to teach – or teach them to do miracles or teach them how to handle a crowd

1)Lord teach us to pray – they knew that it was the key to his intimacy with the father –

His commitment to prayer was a key to him staying focused and on point – Mark 1 –

A)Huge crowds – everyone is looking for you

B)If there was a moment when Jesus could have got swept up in the buzz and the excitement of the moment this was one

C)But Jesus emerging from a quiet place of morning prayer said – it is time to move on to the next town

D)So Prayer was a key to his intimacy with the father 1)– a key to his staying focused

E)As well as a key to His power.

1)Jesus was seen praying before many of the big moments and miracles in his life

So the Disciples no doubt realized that if Jesus THE SON OF GOD – needed to pray –

A)How much more so do we need to pray!

B)So Praying together was one of the **Core Values of the early Church**

C)The Degree to which we pray really will mark the degree to which we dependent upon God!

D)We see this clearly in the life of the early Church

Today I want to go through several passages in the book of Acts that give us insight into the prayer life of the early Church. Start in Acts 1

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but **to wait** for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Acts 1:4-5

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were

staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son of Alphaeus* and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son of James*. ¹⁴ These **all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication**, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” Acts 1:12-14

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:1-4

So in these first few examples – we see that their prayer life involved waiting on the Lord!

A)Prayers don't always get answered immediately – Yes – No- Wait -

B)Jesus taught them – Matthew 7:7-11 ⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **Greek Keep asking...seeking...knocking**

C)Until the Lord answers – Yes or no – we Keep coming to Him

D)Part of the reason the Lord does that is for – **Relationship – I want to spend time with you!**

1)He knows – if he answered the first time every time – only time he would see me! –

E)So Keep coming – keep seeking –

1)So waiting helps build our relationship – learning to be still in his presence

But waiting in prayer is also about dependency

A)Resist that temptation to say – Well I asked God and He didn't answer – so I had to do it myself

B)I will just have to take matters into my own hands!

1)Don't do it – learn to wait!

C)Jesus proceeded to give a good reason for not doing that - Matthew 7:8-11

⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

D) We come to the Lord realizing that he is a good, good father who knows our needs better than we do!

So waiting on the Lord was a part of their prayer life

A) And we see that waiting on the Lord resulted in an outpouring of the Holy Spirit – PENTECOST

B) They received Power – Peter who denied Jesus 3x at a little fire with some servant girls

1) Stands up before 3,000 people and boldly proclaims **you crucified the Messiah and – need to repent – turn your hearts**

C) Listen – we can receive a fresh filling from the Holy Spirit –

1) power for our needs as we learn to wait on the Lord!

In Acts 3

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. Acts 3:1

A) See here a pattern of prayer - 9th hour –

B) Jesus said – are there not 12 hours in a day – viewed 12 hours as the typical hours of sunlight in a day

C) Once the sun came up 5am-6am the Jewish people set aside 3 specific times for prayer – during the daylight hours

1) The 3rd hour which was between 8am-9am the 6th hour – 11-12 and the 9th hour 2pm -3pm

D) So basically every 3 hours they were pausing to pray.

E) In Acts chapter 3 – we see the Apostles heading to the temple for prayer – during the 9th hour!

1) They were following this pattern

Patterns are good! – Schedule for eating- Schedule Gym –Dates

A) Friday is my one day off during the week – Calendar Denise day

B) **Schedule time to spend together** – Sacred – nothing interfere

1) It is scheduled because it is important !

C) Things that are important to us – make it on our schedules

1) Well Is talking to God important ?

If Denise and I didn't schedule Fridays together – we probably wouldn't get any special time alone together

A) Always more to do than we have time to do it –

B) Always more needs to meet than we have time to meet them. - Life is full! –

C) In the same way – if I don't schedule time to meet with the Lord – it is probably not going to happen.

1) Like you I am constantly fighting distractions and demands on my time.

D) Life and responsibilities are so demanding – one of my Mantras is DO THE NEXT THING!

D) I HAVE TO SCHEDULE PRAYER and alone time with God - OR I AM GOING TO CRACK!

Notice that this pattern of prayer brought about a sensitivity of the Holy Spirit and an increase of Faith

And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; ³ who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.

⁴ And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. Acts

3:2-8

The pattern resulted in an opportunity! – They

would have missed it if they hadn't been there
A)It resulted in a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit – Peter sensed the Lord wanted to heal this man

B)The patterned resulted in the gift of faith – to grab the man by the hand – rise up and walk!

They prayed in times of Peril ACTS 4 –

A)After Peter and John were arrested and threatened to stop talking about Jesus

B)What did they do? Not marching – signing petitions – not protesting – they prayed –

23 And being let go, they (Peter and John)went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said:

‘Why did the nations rage,

And the people plot vain 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 against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom

You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered

together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your

purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord,

look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that

with all **boldness they may speak Your word**, 30 by

stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and

wonders may be done through the name of Your holy

Servant Jesus.”

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they

were assembled together was shaken; and they were

all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the

word of God with boldness. Acts 4:23-31

They prayed not for deliverance – but for Boldness!

A)Why? Jesus told them to expect opposition – don't be surprised if the world hates you – hated me

B)Instead praying Lord make it stop – Lord help us stand!

1)We always want it easier - Don't pray for a lighter load – pray for a stronger back

C)We pray out of our ignorance, what seems best to us - **but God answers out of His omniscience.**

1)**We pray out of our impotence**, (our weakness) **but God answers out of His omnipotence.”**

D)They prayed for Boldness – the Result?

1)The Place where they met was shaken – supernatural outpouring

E)They were filled afresh with the Holy Spirit –

1)Baptized afresh with the Holy spirit – and they received boldness!

Acts 6- the first Deacons were chosen - they prayed and laid hands on them. Act 6:6 TODAY MATT

Acts 9 Prayer in a hopeless situation — a woman by the name of Tabitha had died!

A)She was beloved of the Saints in Joppa funeral arrangements were being made.

B)Someone in the church said: - **Peter is in a town near by lets ask him if he would come and pray – God would bring her back to life.**

1)BIG FAITH!!!!

C) I wonder if they were reminded of Martha

1) Martha's brother Lazarus had died – he had been dead 4 days when Jesus showed up.

Martha went out to Jesus and said Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

A)Usually that is where we stop period – Lord you blew it – Lord your timing stinks – Lord if only you would have done blank.

“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

B)What Martha said next is astounding

22 But I know that **even now** God will give you anything you ask.”

C) This is one of the most amazing statements of faith in all of Scripture because of the little conjunction, BUT right in the middle of the sentence.

D) It seems like the sentence should end after Martha says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Why?

E) Because her brother, Lazarus, has been dead for four days!

1) Here view of Jesus was BIGGER than her problem

Even now..... anything you Ask!

Never put a period where God puts a comma."

A) See Sometimes what we perceive as a period is really just a comma.

B) We think that God's **silence or his delay** is the end of the sentence, but it's just a providential pause.

C) When we ATTACH that EVEN NOW FAITH to our prayer life –

1) we are allowing God to not just finish the sentence but to **MAKE A STATEMENT!**

D) Jesus raised Lazarus from the Dead!!!

The Believers in Joppa are practicing what Martha declared: Tabitha is dead; but EVEN NOW – what if

A) Jesus said – You have not because you ask not!

B) "The greatest tragedy in life is the prayers that go unanswered because they go unasked."

C) So they sent for Peter

Then Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up." Acts 9:40

Prayer led to a new Vision for ministry among the Gentiles ⁹ The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour." Acts 10:9

A) Quiet place, Quiet time Quiet heart

B) "A change in routine often results in revelation.

1) In formulaic terms, a change of pace + a change of place = change of perspective."

C) Sheeplike animals – kill and eat – No Lord –

1) Violation of years of tradition

Jesus was using this vision to show Peter that he wanted to break through another tradition

A) Jewish stereotype of viewing a Gentile's home as unclean

B) Peter was about to be invited to the home of a Roman Centurion A Gentile who was seeking God

1) Jesus told Peter to go!

C) He went – stepping through the stereotypes of how Jews viewed Gentiles – He preached Jesus

1) Result outpouring HS – Salvation - New direction – The Gospel was meant for the Gentiles too!

D) A whole new direction and focus for ministry emerged! – Time spent in prayer –

1) **Gentile today – You know Jesus.... That moment**

One of my favorites Acts 12 Prayer in a time of Crisis – Acts 12

Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. 2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. 4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. 5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church." Acts 12:1-5

James arrested and beheaded- Peter is arrested and is next!

A) Constant prayer is made by the Church – desperate

B) Prayer is constant but not expectant –

C) I love this – **I never doubt that God can do anything** – but I often doubt that he wants to do that for me

D) Like the Dad – Lord I believe but help my unbelief!

E) They Prayed and Peter was miraculously released 1) an angel in the night – awakens him – unlocks the doors leads him out
What happens next is hilarious

¹²So, when he had considered *this*, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. ¹³And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. ¹⁵But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel."

¹⁶Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished." Acts 12:12-16

B) I love this lesson - even when we are praying and our faith is lacking God can still respond

One more example Acts 13

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

²As they ministered to the Lord and **fasted, the Holy Spirit said**, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away."

Why we worship before study –

A) Ministering to the Lord Vs FOR THE LORD

B) Ministering to the Lord – speaks of Worship and prayer! – Spirit spoke!

1) Worship prayer fasting – God Spoke

C) Fasting is that spiritual discipline – denying the flesh – Fasting heightens our spiritual sensitivity

1) Denial of the flesh - more in tune to the spirit

D) Paul and Barnabas sent out – the gospel of Jesus began to spread even more.

E) Started with them ministering to the Lord -

1) We can get so busy – ministering for the Lord

So here is what we learn today from the example we see in the early Church: application for us

A) They waited- Result was power! – Are you willing to wait – resist the temptation to take matters....

B) They had a pattern of prayer that resulted in opportunity, sensitivity and, faith healing

1) Right place at the right time –

C) The Lord calling you to establish that pattern of prayer - give you -sensitivity – opportunity – faith

➤ **They prayed in a time of Peril – and threat – the result was a NEW BOLDNESS**

➤ **They prayed in a hopeless situation EVEN NOW and God brought healing and RESURRECTION**

Prayer on a roof top – Quiet place, time, heart

➤ a change of pace + a change of place = change of perspective."

Whole new perspective and ministry resulted

➤ **Prayer in Crisis even though it lacked faith** – led to chains being broken and a prisoner being released

Ministering to the Lord in Prayer and worship with fasting – Resulted in the Holy Spirit speaking

Tonight – We are going to close – Ministering to the Lord – HE IS GOING TO SPEAK – WORDS

Wait – receive Power

Boldness – where there has been fear

HOPELESS AND discouragement – Even Now He is going to work

HEALING -