

A photograph of a church service. In the foreground, a man in a light blue shirt is praying for a woman in a purple hoodie, with his hands on her shoulders. Other people are visible in the background, some with their heads bowed in prayer. The lighting is dim and warm, creating a solemn atmosphere.

When God's Children Pray

Acts 12:1-24



When God's Children Pray

- Prayer is an unimaginably special privilege. God opens the door to His throne room and invites His children to enter His presence with their petitions
 - Heb. 4:16 - “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”



When God's Children Pray

- The All-knowing, All-powerful Creator of everything promises to hear us when we call on Him
 - Jer. 33:3 - “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”



When God's Children Pray

- The God who loves us unconditionally in spite of ourselves promises to answer our prayers when we pray according to His will
 - 1John 5:14-15 - “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”



When God's Children Pray

- There is something special about entering God's presence by ourselves to talk to Him in secret. It is something we should do often.
- There is power in collective prayer. There is something special that occurs when God's children come together united in faith and purpose to seek the Lord in prayer.



It Was A Time Of Problems

- There were attacks
 - James, Peter, the church
- There was apprehension
 - The future
- There was an adversary
 - Herod, the Jews, Satan

It Was A Time Of Prayer

- It was fervent prayer
 - Constant or without ceasing is from ektenes - “intent, constant, strenuous, intense; met: earnest, zealous; (an adjective derived from ek, ‘wholly out’ which intensifies teinō, ‘to stretch’ which is also the root of English terms, ‘tension’ and ‘tense’) properly, stretch out, fully, completely taut; at maximum potential, without slack because fully extended to its necessary outcome; as a medical term, it refers to a stretched ligament or a pulled muscle. It connotes “going beyond the boundaries” (Strongs, Wuest)
 - James 5:16 - “...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”



It Was A Time Of Prayer

- It was faithful prayer
 - Heb. 11:6 - “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
 - Matt. 21:22 - “And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”



It Was A Time Of Prayer

- It was faithful prayer
 - James 1:5-7 - “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord”



It Was A Time Of Prayer

- It was focused prayer
 - They came together to pray for a specific purpose
- It was family prayer
 - The church gathered to pray for one of their own



It Was A Time Of Power

- There was powerful salvation
 - God saved Peter when the church asked Him to
- God is able to do so much more than we can imagine
 - Eph. 3:20 - “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us”



It Was A Time Of Power

- There were powerful surprises.
 - It is not that they didn't believe God could release him, they just didn't think he would do it the way He did
 - As Warren Wiersbe said, "God could get Peter out of a prison, but Peter couldn't get himself into a prayer meeting."

It Was A Time Of Power

- Why were they amazed?
 - Often prayers are made in an atmosphere of unbelief
 - Mark 9:23-24 - “Jesus said to him, If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”
 - Does it trouble us that the success of our prayers on behalf of others may depend on the faith we have when we pray?
 - Matt. 17:20 - “So Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”



It Was A Time Of Power

- There was powerful sovereignty. God gave the church evidence that He is sovereign over everything the church faces.
 - Sovereign over the opposition
 - Sovereign over the outreach
 - Acts 12:24 - “But the word of God grew and multiplied.”



When God's Children Pray

- How can we learn to pray as a congregation like the church prayed for Peter?
 - Stop using memorized clichés and start praying spontaneously from the heart
 - Examine our hearts and be sure there is nothing in us against another brother or sister in Jesus.
 - Seek God often as a family.
 - Call on God in faith, believing Him for all things.
 - Look beyond our own needs and lift up those around us who are in need.
 - Pray about our problems until we see the Lord respond in power
- Something happens when God's people pray. Let's pray together and see what happens.