

# PRAYER AND THE KINGDOM:

## A CULTURE OF CORPORATE PRAYER IN THE CHURCH

*"God waits for the prayers of His children to bring in His kingdom. The Lord's prayer is not just a model for me; it is a revelation of God's heart."*

WATCHMAN NEE, "What Shall This Man Do?"

### • The Culture of Corporate Prayer in the Early Church

***"They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."—Acts 1:14***

*"It was a praying church. It was a church in which they prayed not merely occasionally, but where they all 'continued steadfastly...in the prayers.' (Acts 2:42) They all prayed, not a select few, but the whole membership of the church."*

R.A.TORREY, "The Power of Prayer and the Prayer of Power"

### • Jesus' Call to Corporate Prayer in the Gospels: **"When you pray"**(Lk. 11, 18; Mt.18; Mark 11; Jn.14-16)

### • Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom and Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount

*"The Sermon on the Mount has more to do with prayer than anything else."*

OSWALD CHAMERS. "If You Will Ask"

### • The DNA of a Praying Church: **The Connection Between the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer**

1. The Significance of Jesus Teaching the Beatitudes before the Lord's Prayer
2. The DNA of the Kingdom in the Beatitudes is the Key to Praying the Lord's Prayer
3. The Significance of the Corporateness of the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer

## I. THE DISPOSITION OF A PRAYING CHURCH: DESTITUTE, DESPERATE, DEPENDENT

### 1.) The Blessing of the Beggarly Church: **The "I Have Nothing" Kingdom**

***"Blessed are you who are poor [in spirit], for yours [theirs] is the kingdom of God [heaven]." Luke 6:20; Matthew 5:3***

- The meaning of "poor" (ptochos): "completely destitute; one who has nothing at all."

#### a. **Jesus Taught a Beggarly Form of Prayer:** A Friend at Midnight with No Bread (Luke 11) and a Persistent Widow with No Rights (Luke 18)

*"Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';" —Luke 11:5-6*

*"Blessed is the man who has made that 'I have nothing' the motto of his ministry."*

ANDREW MURRAY

#### b. **From Poor to Pentecost:** The destitute, beggarly church praying ten days in the upper room opened the kingdom of heaven!

*"God likes to see His people shut up to this, that there is no hope but in prayer."*

ANDREW BONAR

**c. From Poor to Power: Ministering in the "I have nothing" Kingdom**

*"Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold **I do not have**, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'"—Acts 3:6*

**d. The Legacy of Laodicea: The Church's Lack of Awareness of Poverty**

*"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and **do not need a thing**.' But you do not **realize** that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."—Revelation 3:17*

**2.) The Blessing of a Church in Mourning: *Desperate for the Presence of the Comforter***

***"Blessed are you [those] who weep now [mourn], for you will laugh [they will be comforted]."***Luke 6:21; Matthew 5:4

**a. The Prophetic Back History of Jesus' Call for Mourning:** The Prophet Joel called for a nation of mourners to rend their hearts with weeping, promising the outpouring of the Spirit.

*"Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the betrothed of her youth." —Joel 1:8*

**b. Jesus Explained the Meaning of Mourning:** Praying for the Bridegroom's Return

*And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." —Matthew 9:15*

*"A deep mourning must be awakened in the heart of the ones betrothed to Him. We fast to remind our hearts that He has been taken away, for we have grown used to His absence. The fasting gives way to mourning and, in mourning, we enter the holy cry, 'Come! --the cry that all of Scripture presses to leave in our hearts.'" DANA CANDLER*

**c. Jesus' Call for a Church in Prayerful Mourning:** The Promise of Joy (Jn. 16:20, 23-24)

**d. The Pentecostal Promise to the Church in Mourning:** The Comforter Will Come

*"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter," —John 14:16*

**3.) Blessing of a Dependent Church: *Meekly Led by the Spirit***

***"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."***—Matthew 5:5

**a. Jesus Modeled Meekness:** "I am meek and lowly of heart." Matthew 11:29

*"Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing." —John 5:19*

*"Jesus did many miracles, but His crown of glory was not the miracles, but His gentleness, tenderness, and humility." P. F. BRESEE*

**b. Meekness Manifested in the Early Church:** Corporate Prayer and the Spirit's Leading (Acts 13:2-3)

*"Prayer meetings have died out because men did not believe in the Holy Ghost."*  
SAMUEL CHADWICK, "The Way to Pentecost."

**c. A Profile of Meekness:** Jesus' Prophecy of Peter and Peter's Encounter (John 20; Acts 10)

## II. THE ATMOSPHERE OF A PRAYING CHURCH: RIGHTEOUSNESS, MERCY, SEEING GOD

### 4.) A Church Hungry and Thirsty for Righteousness: *Praying to be Filled*

***"Blessed are [those] you who hunger now [and thirst for righteousness], for you will be satisfied [they will be filled]." —Luke 6:21; Matthew 5:6***

*"When we hunger for righteousness, we hunger for Jesus."* BILLY HUMPHREY

#### a. Jesus' Call for a Hungry and Thirsty Church: "Come to me"

*"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." —John 6:35*

*"The answer is hunger. Desperate hunger is the currency of heaven. Hunger is what causes us to empty ourselves of compromise and creates a holy dissatisfaction that drives us to our knees."* RHONDA HUGHEY

#### b. Hunger and Thirst Must Originate in the Church: Jesus' Thirst (*John 4, 19*)

Jesus' thirst at a well, awakened the spiritual thirst of a woman and her whole town.  
Jesus' thirst on the Cross, awakened the thirst of a whole world for righteousness!

#### c. A Pentecost of Contagious Thirst: Praying to Be Filled Should Be the Lifestyle of the Church

### 5.) The Church Manifesting Mercy: *Boldly Approaching the Throne of Grace*

***"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." — Matthew 5:7***

#### a. Jesus' Mercy Teaching: Corporate Prayer Requires Corporate Forgiveness (*Mk. 11:24-25*)

#### b. Jesus' Impartation of Mercy: Inhaling the Holy Spirit, Exhaling Forgiveness

*"And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.""*—John 20:22-23

#### c. A Pentecost of Mercy: A Different Kind of Fire

*The same disciples who wanted to call down a fire of judgement on a town in Samaria (Luke 9), were baptized with a different kind of fire, and took the gospel of God's mercy and forgiveness to a whole town in Samaria (Acts 8).*

#### d. The Atmosphere in the Early Church: "Much Grace was Upon them All" (*Acts 4:33*)

#### e. The Connection between Corporate Prayer and Mercy: The Throne of Grace

*"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."* —Hebrews 4:16

### 6.) The Church Corporately Willing One Thing: *Being Built Into a Dwelling Place for God's Shekinah*

***"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." —Matthew 5:8***

*"Purity of heart is to will one thing."* SOREN KIERKEGAARD

**a. The Biblical Vision of the Church: A Holy Habitation**

*"And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling which God lives by his Spirit." —Ephesians 2:22*

**b. The Dilemma of the Church in America: Compromised, Complacent, and Lacking Conviction**

*"Our greatest enemies in the Western world are materialism, spiritual pride, complacency, and self sufficiency. As the church has increasingly compromised and succumbed to the cultural values and lifestyles of the world, her spiritual senses have become dulled." RHONDA HUGHEY*

**c. The Call to the Church: A Corporate Pure Heart Requires a Corporate Repentance and Obedience**

*"When God's glory is not manifest in the church, we must demonstrate 2 Chronicles 7:14, by coming before God with humility, prayer, and repentance." RHONDA HUGHEY*

**d. Seeing God Again in the Church: Prayer, Fire, and Glory**

*"The aim of the prayer meeting is to get heaven open and the glory down." P.F. BRESEE*

**e. Becoming What We Behold : A Holiness Church Again**

*"We need a fresh glimpse of Jesus, to 'behold his glory'. We are transformed by that beholding. We are changed into the likeness of what we behold. If the Church isn't beholding Jesus, she has no hope of becoming like him." RHONDA HUGHEY*

**III. THE IMPARTATION AND IMPACT OF A PRAYING CHURCH: PEACEMAKING AND PERSECUTION**

**7.) The Power of a Peacemaking Church: Sowing the Gospel of Peace**

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." —Matthew 5:9*

**a. A Powerful Picture of a Peacemaking Church: Corporate Prayer and Jesus' Kingdom of Peace**

When the early church prayed, the Spirit of Jesus filled the church, manifesting in grace, powerful witness, salvation, wholeness, miracles, to that point that a healing shadow fell upon all the sick and possessed bringing peace.

**b. Prayer is Peacemaking: Sowing in Tears and Reaping with Shouts of Joy (Psalm 120)**

*"Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness." —James 3:18*

When people pray and Jesus invades a church with His presence and peace, every believer becomes a peacemaker. The world desperately needs a praying church full of peacemakers. The only way to stop abortions, restore marriages, love gays and lesbians to freedom, heal racism, and stop the out of control violence the church must sow in peace through the power of prayer and outgoing mission.

**8.) Prayer and the Persecuted Church: Awakening Hell's Hate and Heaven's Glory**

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." —Matthew 5:10*

**a. The Lack of Persecution in the American Church: Righteousness is the Cause of Persecution**

**b. The Persecuted Church Rejoices: Counted Worthy of Suffering for the Name**

*"The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." —Acts 5:41*