



REVIVING THE PRAYER MEETING

Colossians 4:2

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- CLEAR!
- This is not the word you want to hear in some cases...



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- It seems as if the prayer meeting is on life-support.
- “The ugly fact is that altar fires are either out or burning very low. The prayer meeting is dead or dying. By our attitude to prayer we tell God that what was begun in the Spirit we can finish in the flesh”
([Source](#))
- For our church, it is the service with the lowest attendance. The silver lining of this otherwise discouraging statistic is that the most faithful core of the church is represented in this group.
- It’s been said that the spiritual temperature of a church can be discerned by its prayer meeting.

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- Why is life ebbing away from the prayer meeting?
- One author made the following observations (Bryan Paulus, *Revive* [Summer 2010], 3).
- Prayer meeting has transformed into a Bible study with prayer tacked on.
- An ardent pastoral prayer has turned into a moment of prayer.
- Last workshop of prayer?
- “Do my actions reflect that prayer is the most powerful force for change in the Christian life?”

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- Adjectives/descriptions for the prayer meeting?
 - Boring.
 - Conducive to napping.
 - Gossip-laden.
 - Tedious prayer requests—praying for Brother Jim’s hangnail.
- Activities often observed at prayer meeting:
 - Sleeping
 - Drooling.
 - Snoring.
 - Snorting.
- Admit it—you’ve thought or done these.

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- What does this say about the priorities and spiritual temperature of a church?
- The early church placed a major emphasis on prayer: 1:14; 2:42; 4:24; 6:4; 12:5; 13:3; 14:23.
- The Apostle Paul provides instructions to the church members at Colossae, taking into account their frail flesh and distractible spirits in Colossians 4:2.
- We will quickly observe two instructions on corporate prayer

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- **Pray constantly**, “continue steadfastly in prayer”
 - The verb translated “steadfastly” is also found in Mark 3:9. We should always be ready to launch out into waters of prayer.
 - It has the idea of determination, with the resolve not give up.
 - Both to enter into and to continue in prayer may be difficult (Psalm 141:1, 8; Luke 18:1)
 - We are a people with distractible spirits. Prayer is a manifestation of creaturely dependence.
 - Pressing on is spiritual conditioning.
 - A church body should pray constantly.

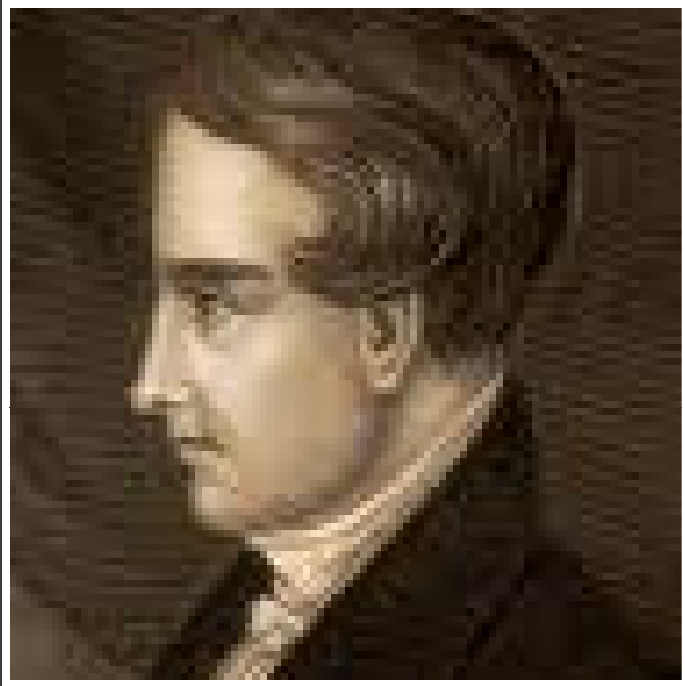
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- **Pray alertly**, “being watchful in it”
- Matthew 26:36-40
- The word watch means “stay awake”
- We are a people cloaked in frail flesh. Prayer is the harmony of the outer man and the inner man in communion with God.
- Usually one of the two needs more help than the other.
- Ephesians 6:18
- Our alertness is usually commensurate with the importance we place on the subject of prayer.
- So what matters to us as we pray?

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- “As a pastor, I have been exasperated with lethargic, dozy prayer gatherings. I do not want to attend, and I certainly do not want to lead those dead-in-the-water prayer times. It’s time to declare war on sleepy prayer meetings . . . He commanded the saints to gather collectively in passionate, Spirit-guided, energized prayer. He also challenged them to stay awake” (Daniel Henderson, “No More Sleepy Prayer Meetings,” [*Revive*, Summer 2010], 7).

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Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Robert Murray M'Cheyne instructed, “Pray for the outpouring of the Spirit on the Church of Christ and for the world—for the purity and unity of God’s children—for the raising up of godly ministers, and the blessing of those that are already. Pray for the conversion of your friends, of your neighbours, of the whole town. Pray for the sending of the gospel to the Jews, and to the Gentile nations” (Bonar, *Memoirs*, 237-8 in Peter Jeffery, *Preachers Who Made a Difference*, 67).

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Charles Spurgeon

“To your knees, you believers, to your knees. Will you lose the opportunity, Christians? Will you let men be lost for want of effort? Let us spend this week in special prayer. Let us meet together as often as we can, and plead the throne; and each of you in private be mighty with your God, and in public be diligent in your efforts” (C.H. Spurgeon in Paulus, “Let’s Raise the Level of Prayer,” [*Revive*, Summer 2010], 3).

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- **Let's revive the prayer meeting!**
- This is up to you and me.
- Paul offers our local congregation the recipe for breathing new life into our prayer meeting:
- **Pray constantly**, “continue steadfastly in prayer”
- Though with distractible spirits, we can and need to be a people constantly at prayer.
- **Pray alertly**, “being watchful in it”
- Though we are cloaked in frail flesh, we need to manifest creaturely dependence by praying alertly and passionately.

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Questions/
Comments