

A Church That SEEKS GOD IN PRAYER

Acts 12:1-25

Read Acts 12:1-19

Why is Peter in prison?

What is the church doing while Peter is in prison?

What can we learn from Peter's ability to sleep the night before his possible execution?

Why do you think the Christians are surprised when God answers their prayers?

What do we learn from Peter's experience about to seek God in prayer?

The story in Acts 12 holds three important lessons that help us to learn how to approach God in prayer. How is each demonstrated?

- Pray with expectation:
- Pray with 'open eyes':
- Pray with thanksgiving:

Where in your life do you need to pray with more expectation, with 'open eyes', and with more thanksgiving?

Adapted from: "Acts: A Church That Shines, by Bill Rasco"

A Church That SEEKS GOD IN PRAYER (WITH NOTES)

Acts 12:1-25

Read Acts 12:1-19

Why is Peter in prison?

What is the church doing while Peter is in prison?

The disciples in Jerusalem are facing persecution under the leadership of King Herod (the grandson of Herod the Great). He puts James to death the sword. The Jews roar with approval so Herod decides to continue to hunt down the apostles. He arrests other Christians with the intention of persecuting them.

What can we learn from Peter's ability to sleep the night before his possible execution?

Personal reflection...

Peter is sleeping so soundly that the angel has to strike him on the side and urge him to wake up. The chains fall off Peter's wrist as the pass by guard after guard until they reach safety. Peter finally realizes that he is not having a vision, but is actually experiencing the power and protection of God as he walks down the street and away from the prison.

Why do you think the Christians are surprised when God answers their prayers?

Personal reflection...

The Christians meeting at the house of Mary finally answer the knock at the door and are astonished to see Peter. Peter tells them of how God moved to set him free, directs them to tell the apostles, and then hides himself from Herod's expected wrath.

What do we learn from Peter's experience about how to seek God in prayer?

The believer's gathered in Mary's home responded in just the right way. They surrendered their problem to God in prayer. They gathered together and lifted Peter up to God in prayer, that He might save Peter. The awkward part comes in their shock when Peter is delivered to them safely.

How often is this the picture of our hearts? We cry out to God and then are astonished when He answers and moves on our behalf. Faith not only brings our circumstances to God but also wait in expectation for His movement and His answer.

The story in Acts 12 holds three important lessons that help us to learn how to approach God in prayer. How is each demonstrated?

- Pray with expectation: **We need to expect that God is going to work. We need to prepare for God to move in our lives. God may not always answer in the way that we expect but we can expect that He WILL answer.**
- Pray with 'open eyes': **Our eyes need to be open to the workings of God. Often we experience and answer to our prayers but move past the answer without noticing how God filled the moment with His glory.**
- Pray with thanksgiving: **Gratitude is an act of surrender and declaration of dependence. Thanksgiving softens our hearts and bends our knees in humility. It keeps our eyes focused on God.**

Where in your life do you need to pray with more expectation, with 'open eyes', and with more thanksgiving?

Personal reflection...