

SERMON NOTES

Connect: OneCry
Joel

Christians agree, God's people should pray. Everyone is grateful to know people are praying for them, but why are we planning to intentionally gather together in prayer as a congregation? Why should you prioritize participation in congregational prayer gatherings? Let me share three primary reasons:

1. A Biblical principle: God has chosen to work through the prayers of His people! *Jeremiah 33:3; Luke 11:9-10*

"God in His sovereignty has chosen to limit His activity to the prayers of His people!" *Vance Pitman*

"God has sovereignly ordained the corporate praying of a church, such that His mighty workings increase exponentially."
Lloyd Stille

"Prayer is not preparation for the battle, it is the battle." *E. M. Bounds*

2. A Biblical pattern: Congregational prayer is modeled throughout the Bible.

A. Old Testament

"When we look to the OT writings, we find a great deal on corporate prayer, particularly in the Psalms spoken from the perspective of a first person plural ("we") narrator, such as Psalm 44. Not every Psalm is explicitly messianic, of course, but David's predominance over the Psalter, the messianic and Edenic connotations in Psalms 1 and 2, and the way the New Testament authors place the Psalms into the mouth of Jesus, which puts the appeals to the clean hands of a righteous man in a whole new light, are all hints that the Psalms must be prayed and sung by God's people as they identify with a righteous covenantal mediator (see *Hebrews 2:10-18; 5:5-10*)."

B. New Testament (*Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4*)

C. Church history

"The prayer meeting ought to be the most important meeting of the church." *R. A. Torrey*

3. A Biblical picture: Seek God in desperate prayer, experience God in power! *Joel 2, Acts 2*

The chief quality that corporate prayer has over other kinds of prayer is agreement! *C. Peter Wagner; Matthew 18:19*

The devastation in Judah brought desperation and Joel called the people to gather and cry out in repentance for God's manifest presence.

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Key thought: Out of desperation we must unite and in repentance cry out for God's manifest presence.

1. Together in prayer: (the picture) *Joel 2:15-17*

2. Together in prayer: (the motivation)

a. The dryness and devastation in the land

Severe drought and invasion of locusts – Joel saw these as punishment for the sins of the people and as a preview of a future military campaign in the Day of the Lord.

b. The Day of the Lord – future reality – (possibly present and future)

“The Day of the Lord refers to a decisive action of Yahweh to bring His plans for Israel to completion.”
Duane Garrett, (p. 306)

c. God's invitation

d. God's incentive

Reasons you should gather for prayer:

- Praying together is modeled throughout God's Word.
- Praying together teaches us about prayer.
- Praying together unifies the Body of Christ.
- Praying together opens our hearts to the needs of others.
- Praying together edifies and encourages one another.
- Praying together strengthens weakened faith.
- Praying together can facilitate corporate repentance.
- Praying together creates a sense of expectancy.
- Praying together is a God ordained means through which He displays His power and glory!

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”
Matthew 18:19–20

“And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.” *Acts 4:31*