

# 11 Praying Together The Early Church

## Acts 4:23-31

We can pray together in many ways-in a church service, with a friend, alongside people at work or college, or in a prayer meeting. Some of us find these times a great blessing, and some find them very difficult. The experience of the early church was that when they prayed together, the church grew (Acts 2:42). But what were their prayer meetings like?

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** Some people enjoy praying with other Christians, while others find it a terrifying experience. What contribution to your Christian life has praying with other Christians brought?

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**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** How do you think that praying with someone else does (or could) help you to pray more faithfully?

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This passage gives us the opportunity to listen in on one of the early church's prayer meetings, to see how and for what they prayed. *Read Acts 4:23-31.*

1. Peter and John have just been released from prison by the religious authorities for preaching about Christ and performing a miracle. In what way(s) is the early church's response to such persecution surprising?

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2. What does the passage teach us about the unity of the believers?

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3. How can praying with other Christians build unity in the face of temptation or trial?

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4. What aspects of God's character seem to be in the minds of the believers as they pray?

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How might concentrating on the character of God have helped the believers to gain perspective on the persecution they faced?

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5. Often we perceive evil to have triumphed over good. What can we learn from verses 24-28 to help us understand such situations?

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6. Look at the requests in verses 29-30. What do they teach us about the believers' priorities and attitudes?

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7. Not all answers to prayers are dramatic, but the believers' prayer was clearly answered (v. 31). Sometimes we can be surprised by how God answers our prayers. Why do you think this is?

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8. Verse 31 tells us that a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit enabled the church to be bold in its evangelism. How does this compare with what Christians often desire from their experience of the Holy Spirit?

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9. What do you find difficult about praying with others?

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**Together**

10. What can Christians do (or stop doing) to help each other feel more at ease: when praying together?

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*Pray about any difficult situations you are facing, especially where boldness is required.*

**Now or Later**

Spend some time thinking about how you pray or can pray with other people. If you do pray with others, how can you help them feel at ease praying with you? If you don't pray with anyone else, consider finding someone to pray with and decide together what you can pray about.