

Be Devoted to Prayer 2020-09-06

Acts 2:42-43

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

Thank you for sabbatical: Like in past 1st Sunday back to update/encourage you.

- Like everyone's life my original plans disrupted.....No Ghana or Florida.
 - God is sovereign: Learned much about myself, our Lord and prayer.
- Spent time in prayer, e-course on prayer, read books on prayer from famous dead guys (Andrew Murry, Brother Lawrence) & present intercessors (Jim Cymbala, Dan Henderson),
 - Main goal: set up the year of prayer for LEFC.

Holy Spirit guiding LEFC before and during Sabbatical.

- Nov 2019 sensed 2020 very difficult (bad feeling) but we'll see glory of God.
 - Lord parting Red Sea for His people.
- Dec 2019 Holy Spirit directed elders to year of prayer for vision.
- Sab: Elders read Chan's *Letters to the Church*....seemed like chapters in book I already reading *Old Paths New Power* by Henderson.
- Holy Spirit guiding me & women's ministry focus on Psalms without other knowing.
 - These just few testimonies.

Lord not just calling LEFC to pray for year but become a praying church.

- Calling us to be "devoted to prayer" like early church. Acts 2:42, 1:14, Chan
 - Devoted: to be earnest towards, to persevere, be constantly diligent.

Prayer preceded outpouring of Holy Spirit then and now. Acts 1 before Acts 2

- No known revival that wasn't preceded by intense prayer.
 - Revival = God's people's hearts return to him.
 - Evangelism byproduct of revival. J.I Packer partial

Transformation travels from church into world, not other way around.

- God changes Christian's hearts when pray and then uses hearts changed by Gospel to impact/change the world.
 - This 1 reason world constantly attacking Christian to discourage, hinder devotion to prayer.....by exchanging truth for lies.

Endlessly communicating God abandoned you, is weak, uncaring, unkind, unfair,

- no hope for change (marriage), faith foolish, prayer powerless/ineffective.
 - World mocks. "Instead of praying do something."

Prayer is activism....seeking omnipotent Lord to act in world for His glory.

- In scripture, prayer not only thing church did, just 1st thing because deeply desired God's glory above own glory. 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Ephesians 6:12, Philipians 2:14-15

- Your initial response to these times w/mouth, fingers, feet or knees?
 - God glorifying activism starts; continues and ends with prayer.

Prayer not man's idea to get God to do/give us something.

- Secondary purpose is to co-labor with the Lord in his work in this world.

Prayer ordained by Lord...first and foremost for fellowship with Him not working for him

- Being "devoted to prayer" foundationally is being constantly diligent in pursuing our relationship with our precious Lord, Savior and friend.
 - It's in prayer where we understand more clearly the depth of truth that He is worthy and we are His needy children!

As God reveals His beauty, power, love for us thru His Word and in prayer our faith grows and our prayers change... more Christ-centered and big. Exodus 15:1-2, 6, 7, 11, 13

- Prayer saturated in childlike faith: bold, dependent, confident, regular.
 - Big prayers filled with faith and expectancy because "My dad do anything He desires, knows everything, fix anything....in my life or this world."

Lord's call for LEFC to be devoted to prayer this year is primary an endless call for us to delight in Him.

- At same time He desires that thru us gospel would change community/world.
 - Electing a specific political party or redefining some social issue will not bring real LASTING change to our nation/world.
 - Only the gospel can change hearts and changed hearts can change the world. J.I Packer, Dan Henderson
- Change always starts among God's people and then explodes into culture ... awakening and transforming death >life, discouragement >hope, fear >joy.

Be encouraged...God specifically created you for times such as these so by His grace you can be devoted to prayer and see the glory of your God.

"Rather than busying themselves with countless endeavors, the early followers devoted themselves to a few. And it changed the world.

In our impatient culture, we want to experience biblical awe without biblical devotion. At the core of our dysfunction is not necessarily style or structure but lack of devotion."

Francis Chan. Letters to the Church

"We have often become so focused on our requests for God to change things around us that we have become unresponsive to His power to effect change within us – then through us. In the end, too many things remain unchanged. We need to rediscover prayer as more than a therapeutic outlet but instead as a transforming intimacy that changes the way we think, feel, act, and react." *Dan Henderson*

"God revives his church and then the new life overflows from the church for the conversion of outsiders and the renovation of society." *J. I. Packer*