

Devoting Ourselves to Prayer

Scripture Reading — Acts 12:5-17

Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. Acts 12:5 —

In his book *Why Pray?* Rev. John De Vries asks, "Does it pay to pray?" Sometimes praying seems like a waste of time. Sometimes you pray and nothing happens. As one teenager put it, "Sometimes when you pray it seems like you're talking to an empty chair."

Does it pay to pray? Even the early Christians were not always sure. According to Acts 12, while Peter was in prison "the church was earnestly praying to God for him." But when God answered by freeing Peter that very night, they didn't believe it right away. In fact, when the servant girl told them Peter was at their door, they responded by saying she was out of her mind.

Does it pay to pray? Of course it does! Read through the book of Acts, and you will find that the early church prayed faithfully and effectively. Acts 2:42 tells us that the early Christians "devoted themselves ... to prayer," and in Acts 4:31 we read that "after they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly." When everything looked desperate, the church prayed earnestly.

I know of a church that committed to praying for 50 converts during a new year. On the last day of that year the pastor received word that the 50th person had committed her life to the Lord. Let's be faithful in prayer!

Prayer

Father in heaven, make us faithful in prayer so that we can experience your powerful work in our lives and in our world. Fill us with your strength for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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