

## ***The Early Church's Rhythm of Prayer***

### **I. Foundation In The Upper Room**

- a. The early church was birthed in prayer. After Jesus' final instructions to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit's power (**Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5**), the disciples chose active, expectant pursuit over passive waiting. They gathered with a shared focus, seeking the fulfillment of His promise together.

***(Luke 24:49 NASB) "And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."***

***(Acts 4:1-5 NASB) "Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."***

- b. They devoted themselves to continual prayer in the temple (**Luke 24:53; Acts 1:14**), the very house of prayer Jesus had zealously defended (**Mark 11:17**). These consistent upper room gatherings became the launching pad for a movement that would change the world. This rhythm of united prayer prepared the way for the supernatural outpouring of Pentecost, which officially birthed the Church.

***(Luke 24:50-53 NASB) "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising God."***

***(Acts 1:14 NASB) "All these were continually devoting themselves with one mind to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."***

***(Acts 2:1 NASB) "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place"***

- c. The 10 days in the upper room serve as a model for us today, showing that seasons of expectantly waiting on God in unified prayer lead to breakthrough. At Pueblo Incense House of Prayer, we have created a dedicated space, a modern-day expression of that "upper room", where believers can gather to expectantly seek God and His purposes together. Just as the early disciples devoted themselves to prayer in anticipation of the Holy Spirit's power, we set aside regular times in our prayer room where we call people to adore Jesus, align our hearts with His purposes and, agree with His desires for our region and beyond.

### **II. Prayer As Daily Rhythm**

- a. Prayer wasn't occasional for the early church; it was a daily rhythm woven into their very fabric. **Acts 2:42-47** reveals their devotion to four pillars: apostolic teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer, practiced both in homes and daily in temple courts. For the early church, prayer wasn't religious obligation or desperate last resort, it was foundation and first response to every circumstance. Their prayer meetings became like a heartbeat that was steady, life-giving, and essential for sustaining the church in unity, boldness, and effectiveness in advancing the Gospel.

***(Acts 2:42-47 NASB) "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all the believers were together and had all things in common; 45 and they would sell their property and possessions and share them with all, to the extent that anyone had need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."***

- b. When opposition struck, prayer remained the instinctive first response for the early church leaders. After Peter and John healed a lame beggar and preached boldly, they ended up being forcefully detained by religious leaders (**Acts 4:3**). When they were released, they didn't have a strategy meeting on “*how to not get persecuted for preaching*”, Instead, they immediately gathered their friends for a fiery prayer meeting, resulting in a divine encounter that literally shook the building (**Acts 4:31**). It was their persistent prayer that created the atmosphere for God's manifest presence to show up and fill them with boldness.

*(Acts 4:2-3 NASB) “being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them and put them in prison until the next day, for it was already evening.”*

*(Acts 4:23-31 NASB) “When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported everything that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard this, they raised their voices to God with one mind and said, “Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in them, 25 who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, ‘Why were the nations insolent, And the peoples plotting in vain? 26 The kings of the earth [r]took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.’ 27 For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and purpose predestined to occur. 29 And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant it to Your bond-servants to speak Your word with all confidence, 30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and [w]signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” 31 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.”*

### III. Continual Worship & Prayer As A Global Strategy

- a. The early church understood prayer and worship as central to God's strategy for reaching nations. At the Jerusalem Council, James connected their expanding mission to **Amos 9:11–12**, explaining that the restoration of “*David's fallen tabernacle*”, a place marked by continual worship and prayer, was part of God's plan to draw Gentiles to Himself (**Acts 15:16–17**).

*(Acts 15:16-17 NASB) “After they stopped speaking, James responded, saying, “Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has described how God first concerned Himself about taking a people for His name from among the Gentiles. 15 The words of the Prophets agree with this, just as it is written: 16 ‘After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the fallen tabernacle of David, And I will rebuild its ruins, And I will restore it, 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,’ 18 Says the Lord, who makes these things known from long ago.”*

- b. James recognized this prophecy's “*already, but not yet*” fulfillment. While the ultimate restoration awaits Christ's return, the early church was experiencing the present reality of God's global strategy already in motion. According to James, The Davidic pattern of continual worship and prayer wasn't ancient history, but a foundational blueprint for the church and a strategy for world evangelization. Through communities committed to a rhythm of worship and prayer meetings, God would shake nations and draw all peoples to Himself.

*(Isaiah 56:6-8 NASB) “Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, To attend to His service and to love the name of the Lord, To be His servants, every one who keeps the Sabbath so as not to profane it, And holds firmly to My covenant; 7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.” 8 The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, “I will yet gather others to them, to those already gathered.”*

IV. The Sacred Pulse

- a. Prayer was the early church’s heartbeat, sustaining supernatural power, unshakable unity, and unstoppable mission. From upper room expectancy to temple courts’ daily devotion, from crisis gatherings to strategic planning meetings, prayer fundamentally shaped their identity as God’s living dwelling place. Nearly every recorded breakthrough in Acts is either preceded or accompanied by prayer, most often in the context of a gathering.

Event	Reference	Prayer Connection
Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost	<b>Acts 1:14; 2:1–4</b>	120 believers devoted themselves to prayer for 10 days before Pentecost.
Matthias chosen to replace Judas	<b>Acts 1:23–26</b>	They prayed for God’s choice before casting lots.
Healing of the lame man at the temple gate	<b>Acts 3:1–8</b>	Peter and John were on their way to the temple at the hour of prayer.
Boldness after persecution	<b>Acts 4:23–31</b>	Believers prayed in unity; the place was shaken and they were filled with the Spirit.
Signs and wonders through the apostles	<b>Acts 5:12–16</b>	Not directly stated, but follows the prayer-filled culture from Acts 4.
Appointment of the seven (deacons)	<b>Acts 6:4–6</b>	Apostles commit to prayer and ministry of the Word; pray and lay hands on the seven.
Holy Spirit falls on Samaritans	<b>Acts 8:14–17</b>	Peter and John pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit.
Saul’s conversion and commissioning	<b>Acts 9:10–18</b>	Saul is praying when Ananias is sent to him.
Raising of Tabitha (Dorcas)	<b>Acts 9:36–41</b>	Peter kneels and prays before raising her from the dead.
Cornelius’ household receives the Gospel	<b>Acts 10:1–48</b>	Cornelius is praying; Peter receives his vision during prayer.
Peter freed from prison	<b>Acts 12:5–17</b>	The church is earnestly praying for him.
Missionary commissioning of Paul and Barnabas	<b>Acts 13:1–4</b>	Prophets and teachers worship, fast, and pray before sending them.
Philippian women (including Lydia) respond to the Gospel	<b>Acts 16:13–15</b>	Paul meets them at a place of prayer by the river.
Earthquake in Philippian jail / jailer’s salvation	<b>Acts 16:25–34</b>	Paul and Silas pray and sing hymns before the earthquake.
Paul heals Publius’ father and others in Malta	<b>Acts 28:8–9</b>	Paul prays before laying hands on the sick man.

- b. The pattern is unmistakable: prayer didn't supplement their ministry; it was the atmosphere where all ministry flourished. If today's church desires the same supernatural power and wants to walk in the fullness of her purpose, she must return to this foundational rhythm. Prayer cannot remain an accessory or opening ceremony to “more important” activities. It must become what it was for the fathers of our faith, the very pulse of all we do, the space where heaven invades earth and God's presence transforms both those praying and the world around them.

(Colossians 4:2 NASB) “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of Thanksgiving...”

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NASB) “Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; For this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus”

(Ephesians 6:18 NASB) “With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be alert with all perseverance and in every request for all the saints...”