



LECTURE 8

AGREEING TOGETHER
in PRAYER

Carence Sexton

Signature PASTORS' COLLEGE 2014



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray. He taught them how to get their prayers answered. In Acts chapter one, we come to a scene on the Mount of Olives describing the Lord Jesus Christ’s ascension. As He is taken out of sight, angels stand by and say, *“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11).

We are to look for and love the appearing of Jesus Christ. I hope that you have the right attitude about the Second Coming of Christ. The quality of your Christian life is determined by your outlook—looking *to* Him and looking *for* Him. Our hope is not in the Second Coming of Christ but in the Christ of the Second Coming. We are to love His appearing.

Can you imagine walking with the Lord Jesus here on earth, or being one of those in His family? His mother, for example, knew what no other human being knew: no man had anything to do with the birth of this One. She stood at Calvary and watched Jesus Christ bleed and die. He was her own Son. She was the vessel God had chosen to bring forth what He sent forth into the world.

*Notes and
Application*



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

Mary did not cry out in some rage, “Come down from there! Let me tell you the truth!” No, she stood there in silence with absolute confidence in God knowing that He was the virgin-born Son of God. She had to put her faith in Christ just as all others have to put their faith in Christ for their soul’s salvation.

Think of being with Him, loving Him, following Him. And now He had ascended to heaven out of their sight.

The Bible says in Acts 1:12-14,

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

The New Testament church continued in prayer. As we search the Scriptures, we find the church meeting in two distinctively different kinds of meetings. They gathered together for the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. This is evident as we read the epistles of Paul and the book of Acts.

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

The second kind of meeting we find in the New Testament is one that churches today have sadly neglected. We must admit to our own shame in this area. The most necessary meeting you find the church having in the New Testament was a prayer meeting. This necessary meeting is the most neglected.

In Ephesians 5:20 the Bible says, *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* We are to pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praying to the Father is something I think we understand. We can call God our Father. The Bible says in Romans 8:14-15, *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”*

We are not children of God by nature; we are children of the Devil by nature. Every human being is stillborn spiritually. No one is a child of God by nature. We must receive a new nature. It is not something we inherit. We must be born into God’s family. God becomes our Father as we become His children by faith, repenting of our sin and trusting Christ as Saviour.

The Bible says we are to pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Often we say

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

when we pray, “In Jesus’ name.” We should not use only the human title. We should pray as we are instructed, “*in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” combining all three of these titles. Why? Because we are speaking of the victorious One, our conquering Christ, our ascended Lord.

The Bible says in Hebrews chapter twelve that we are to look unto Jesus “*the author and finisher of our faith.*” When you look unto the Lord, what Christ are you looking to? When you imagine that you are looking to the Lord Jesus, what do you imagine? The Bible teaches us in Hebrews 8:1, “*Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*”

The Bible uses the word *sum*. This is the total. This is all. The Christ we look to is the victorious, seated Saviour, co-equal, co-existent, eternally existent with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. I believe this is the One to whom we look. When we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are declaring the authority that He has. He has satisfied every demand of a Holy God. He has satisfied every demand made by the Law. He has purchased our salvation with His own blood. Salvation is full, free, and forever. He lives forevermore seated in heaven. He is our risen Saviour. He is God. We look to Him.

*Notes and
Application*



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

When we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no higher name, no greater name by which we may pray. No other name has more authority than His name. He is our conquering Christ. The praying church understands this.

We face many enemies and obstacles. The songwriter had it right when he wrote, “Through many dangers, toils, and snares...” We need authority, and there is no higher authority than our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the way we should pray.

We should pray together as a church. Of course, I believe in individual prayers. But we should meet together for prayer. There must be meetings that are planned and an agenda from which we approach the Lord. Collectively, we believe as a church that these are things for which we need to pray and seek God’s face. The praying church must collectively come together to pray and go to the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for specific things.

A praying church is like a body that is functioning properly. People are not going in different directions. A praying church is functioning as a group of baptized believers who have voluntarily joined themselves together to do the work that God has given that local congregation to do.

*Notes and
Application*



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

Of course, we believe in the priesthood of every believer. We have “individual soul liberty.” This is a gift from God. But there is something very pleasing to God when a church prays together and works together, going to the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will never accomplish what must be accomplished for the Lord and His glory, without being a praying church.

The early disciples realized how important this was. There were many arguments going on in the church. There arose a murmuring among the widows. It was a problem that had to be addressed. Consider the testimony of the disciples in Acts 6:4, *“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”*

If we were making that statement, we may say, “We want to give ourselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer.” But there is a divine order here. We cannot minister the Word of God without first praying. We cannot know God’s Book without knowing the God who wrote it and conversing with Him.

Prayer Declares Our Dependence Upon God

If we said that there are certain things sadly lacking in our lives, most of us would have to put praying at the top of the list. In this day and age we think we have learned everything we need to learn, and we think we know how to get everything done. We force our way through life instead of faithing

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

our way through life. We actually declare by our lack of praying that we do not need God.

The truth is, God will allow us to attempt to live without Him and will let us see what we can accomplish. There are many things being done without God that bring no glory to God and much glory to men. These are fruits that do not last. They soon rot. They are not of the Lord. Life’s greatest failures are those things we call successes that are not in the will of God.

I want to be a part of a praying church. As a pastor, I must take the time to teach the Word of God and lead others by example in this matter of prayer.

There should be regular times when the church is called together to do nothing but pray. A church declares its absolute dependence upon God through prayer.

The Bible says in Acts 1:14, *“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”*

If we were having a preaching meeting, a meeting to teach the Word of God, I would say that in that meeting, only the men should do the preaching and teaching to a mixed audience. I believe I could show you from the Bible that men

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

are to do that. But in this prayer meeting, I think you would be hard pressed to prove that these women were not praying.

Let me take it a step further. I believe they were praying audibly. As a matter of fact, if they were part of the church, and they were, they came together as a church to pray.

If the Lord had not spoken to them the way He had spoken to them and told them they were not orphans, they would have felt as if they were orphans. Christ was gone. They were all alone. This was something new. Though God has always had a people, the church did not exist in the Old Testament. It started with Christ and His disciples. The church age had a beginning and the church age will have an ending. God has always had a people, but the church was a sacred secret and was revealed as Christ was rejected as the king of the Jews.

This church prayed. They needed to know what to do. They came together and prayed as a church. That is what a praying church does; it does not run ahead, but waits on the Lord.

We never waste time waiting on God. He is never late. Sometimes we are early, but He is never late.

*Notes and
Application*



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

Through Prayer We Seek God for Laborers

In Matthew 9:37-38 the church sought God for laborers. The Bible says, *“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”*

Where is the Lord’s harvest? Is the harvest only in your area? No, the harvest field is the world.

When the praying church seeks God for laborers, God will hear and send laborers. We do not have laborers because we do not ask God for them.

When we hear about a great need, we should pray as a church. We should bring it to the attention of the whole church, not just one or two people, and pray for laborers. This is what a praying church does.

As One Body We Agree in Prayer

Notice again in the Gospel according to Matthew chapter eighteen that the Lord gives specific instruction about church discipline. Consider what the Bible says in verses nineteen and twenty,

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This promise is made to the smallest, plural company one could possibly have. The application here is the church praying together, binding things together. The church came together as one body in agreement.

Churches do not agree because they do not pray together. Praying together as a church will have the same effect that praying together as a family will have.

There was something going on that was very troubling in Matthew chapter eighteen. Someone had to be disciplined, and the church was about to be divided. There would be the possibility of some real conflict. The Devil would like to tear things apart and make the divide even greater. But this praying church came together in agreement as they prayed and sought God’s face.

It is right to voice this agreement as we hear the prayers of others. We acknowledge our agreement by saying “Amen” in our hearts and with our lips to the prayers of those who express the desire of

*Notes and
Application*



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

our hearts. We have power in prayer as we agree and bind things together in prayer to God.

We Seek God’s Protection Through Prayer

In Matthew 26:41 our Lord Jesus said, *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* The church sought protection from God.

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”* When I hear of someone I love dearly who has sinned, I immediately think, *“Did I pray for him?”* and I think, *“Did we pray for him as we should have prayed for him?”*

Do you pray for your pastor like you should pray for your pastor? Do you pray for others who serve God in the church? Do you know who they are? Do you pray for them?

What shock and hurt churches go through when a moral failure enters the life of someone who is in leadership. We must pray for people.

The praying church seeks God for His guiding and protecting hand. We must pray for the children of our church. We must pray for the youth that God will protect them—not just the ones in our household, but all the young people of the church family.

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

Pray specifically for these that affect the testimony of your church. Pray for people on the job that they will keep their minds clean and have a strong witness for Christ.

A praying church realizes that the Devil is out there and that he is trying to do everything he can to bring his greatest temptation across our path at our weakest moment. The only way to win the victory is through prayer.

We Have Increased Faith and Enlarged Vision Through Prayer

In Acts 4, we find that the disciples were told by religious leaders who opposed them not to do what they were doing any longer. A great miracle had taken place and persecution was brought on because of it. In Acts 4:23-24 the Bible says,

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.

They began to quote Scripture in their prayer, which is a wonderful thing. They quoted the Psalms in their prayer. They continued to pray in verses twenty-five through twenty-nine,

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

This is the behavior of a praying church. Do you recognize what they did? They did not look at themselves. They did not look at flesh matched against flesh. They looked to heaven and said, *“Thou art God!”* and their faith was increased and their vision enlarged.

I go to churches that have little or no faith and have no vision. Do you know why? They do not pray because they do not look to the Lord. When we turn our eyes upon the Lord, our faith increases and our vision enlarges. Find a man that has been with God and he will have the heart of God for things.

Do you want that kind of church? You can be a part of that kind of church if you will pay the price in prayer.

*Notes and
Application*



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

We Face Great Trials Through Prayer

In Acts chapter twelve, a mighty leader in the church, James the brother of John, was killed. They thought it was such a good idea to kill James, they decided to kill Peter also. The Bible says in Acts 12:5, *“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”*

If you have read the story, you know that Peter was miraculously delivered. This church faced times of great trial through prayer. When they prayed, Peter was miraculously delivered. Acts 12:12 says, *“And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.”*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said that, when Peter got out of jail and he was miraculously delivered, he knew exactly where to go because he knew they were having a prayer meeting in Mary’s house. Peter made a beeline for Mary’s house in Jerusalem. He waited at the door. Rhoda came to the door, and after seeing Peter, ran to tell the others that he was standing at the door.

Through Prayer We Seek
God for Opportunities to
Spread the Gospel

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

In Colossians 4:1-3 the Bible says,

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.

The followers of our Lord Jesus were taught by Him that they could receive what they needed from God through prayer. This was the Bible method they employed in times of need.

The church sought God for opportunities to get out the gospel. Would it be stretching it to say that our message must always be biblical and our methods must always be biblical? So much has gone on unguarded because people have been convinced that methods do not have to be biblical. Yes, methods must be as biblical as the message.

The means can change, but the message and the methods must always be biblical. For example, if I lived one hundred years ago, I would use a horse and buggy to get somewhere. Now I can get on a plane and fly there. I can speak on one side of America in the morning and the other side

*Notes and
Application*



“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

of the nation in the evening. But I am doing the same thing. I am traveling. I am preaching the same message and using the same methods but just using a different means of getting there. We should seek God in our churches to lead us and show us how to get out the gospel, never violating our biblical message or our biblical methods.

For example, God led our church to live-stream our meetings by means of the internet. People from more than nearly two hundred countries have watched at one time or another. We prayed earnestly about how to reach the university campuses. We sought God and said, “There’s a city within a city, with 26,000 students on one campus.” People told us we could not get in. We are not only there witnessing every week, we are also having services each week on that campus. Many are attending our church meetings and coming to know Christ as Saviour. These things happen through prayer.

The “powers that be” said it was impossible to have Bible clubs in public schools. This is now in more than forty public schools in our area. God opened the door through prayer. By the way, we must keep these doors open through prayer. Prayer is declaring our absolute dependence upon God.

I am sure there are many other things we could do to spread the gospel. How will churches get the message out? How will we know how to get this

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

message out? The Bible teaches in Colossians 4:2-3 that we pray for God to give us direction. That is what a praying church does.

Do you want to be a part of a praying church? Believe God for great things! Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, and a man mightily used of God, chose as his motto, “God is always advancing.” Let us advance in prayer.

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

*Notes and
Application*



AGREEING TOGETHER *in* PRAYER

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:15

*Notes and
Application*
